हे पुस्तक मोडल असल्यास कृपया
साधारण वाइंडिंग



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A SUMMER IN SKYE

IN TWO VOLUMES

A SUMMER IN SKYE

By ALEXANDER SMITH

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VOLUME II.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

	PAGE
THE LANDLORD'S WALK,	1
ORBOST AND DUNVEGAN,	66
DUNTULM,	106
JOHN PENRUDDOCK;	157
A SMOKING PARLIAMENT,	188
[redacted] EMIGRANTS,	206
[redacted]EWARDS,	214
[redacted]OW,	235
HOME,	305

A SUMMER IN SKYE.

THE LANDLORD'S WALK.

WALKING into the interior of Skye is like walking into antiquity; the present is behind you, your face is turned toward Ossian. In the quiet silent wilderness you think of London, Liverpool, Edinburgh, or whatever great city it may be given you to live and work in, as of something of which you were cognisant in a former existence. Not only do you breathe the air of antiquity; but everything about you is a veritable antique. The hut by the road-side, thatched with turfs, smoke issuing from the roof, is a specimen of one of the oldest styles of architecture in the world. The crooked spade with which the crofter turns over the sour ground carries you away into fable. You

remove a pile of stones on the moor, and you come to a flagged chamber in which there is a handful of human bones—*whose,* no one can tell. Duntulm and Dunsciach moulder on their crags, but the song the passing milkmaid sings is older than they. You come upon old swords that were once bright and athirst for blood; old brooches that once clasped plaids; old churchyards with carvings of unknown knights on the tombs; and old men who seem to have inherited the years of the eagle or the crow. These human antiques are, in their way, more interesting than any other: they are the most precious objects of *virtu* of which the island can boast. And at times, if you can keep ear and eye open, you stumble on forms of life, relations of master and servant, which are as old as the castle on the crag or the cairn of the chief on the moor. Cash payment is *not* the "sole nexus between man and man." In these remote regions your servants' affection for you is hereditary as their family name or their family ornaments; your foster-brother would die willingly for you; and if your nurse had the writing of your epitaph, you would be the bravest, strongest,

handsomest man that ever walked in shoe leather or out of it.

The house of my friend Mr M'Ian is set down on the shore of one of the great Lochs that intersect the island; and as it was built in smuggling times, its windows look straight down the Loch towards the open sea. Consequently at night, when lighted up, it served all the purposes of a lighthouse: and the candle in the porch window, I am told, has often been anxiously watched by the rough crew engaged in running a cargo of claret or brandy from Bordeaux. Right opposite, on the other side of the Loch, is the great rugged fringe of the Cuchullin hills; and lying on the dry summer grass you can see it, under the influence of light and shade, change almost as the expression of a human face changes. Behind the house the ground is rough and broken, every hollow filled, every knoll plumaged with birches, and between the leafy islands, during the day, rabbits scud continually, and in the evening they sit in the glades and wash their innocent faces. A mile or two back from the house a glen opens into soft green meadows, through which a stream flows; and

on these meadows Mr M'Ian, when the weather permits, cuts and secures his hay. The stream is quiet enough usually, but after a heavy day's rain, or when a waterspout has burst up among the hills, it comes down with a vengeance, carrying everything before it. On such occasions its roar may be heard a mile away. About a pistol-shot from the house the river is crossed by a plank bridge, and in fine weather it is a great pleasure to sit down there and look about one. The stream flows sluggishly over rocks, in the deep places of a purple or port-wine colour, and lo! behind you, through the arch, slips a sunbeam, and just beneath the eye there gleams a sudden chasm of brilliant amber. The sea is at ebb, and the shore is covered with stones and dark masses of sea-weed; and the rocks a hundred yards off—in their hollows they hold pools of clear sea-water in which you can find curious and delicately-coloured ocean blooms—are covered with orange lichens, which contrast charmingly with the masses of tawny dulse and the stone-littered shore on the one side, and the keen blue of the sea on the other. Beyond the blue of the sea the great hills rise, with a radiant

vapour flowing over their crests. Immediately to the left a spur of high ground runs out to the sea edge,—the flat top smooth and green as a billiard table, the sheep feeding on it white as billiard balls,—and at the foot of this spur of rock a number of huts are collected. They are half lost in an azure veil of smoke, you smell the peculiar odour of peat reek, you see the nets lying out on the grass to dry, you hear the voices of children. Immediately above, and behind the huts and the spur of high ground, the hill falls back, the whole breast of it shaggy with birch-wood; and just at the top you see a clearing and a streak of white stony road, leading into some other region as solitary and beautiful as the one in which you at present are. And while you sit on the bridge in a state of half-sleepy contentment —a bee nuzzling in a bell-shaped flower within reach of your stick, the sea-gulls dancing silent quadrilles overhead, the white lightning flash of a rabbit from copse to copse twenty yards off— you hear a sharp whistle, then a shout, and looking round there is M'Ian himself standing on a height, his figure clear against the sky: and imme-

diately the men tinkering the boat on the shore drop work and stand and stare, and out of the smoke that wraps the cottages rushes bonnetless, Lachlan Dhu, or Donald Roy, scattering a brood of poultry in his haste, and marvelling much what has moved his master to such unwonted exertion.

My friend's white house is a solitary one, no other dwelling of the same kind being within eight miles of it. In winter, wind and rain beat it with a special spite; and the thunder of the sea creeps into your sleeping ears, and your dreams are of breakers and reefs, and ships going to pieces, and the cries of drowning men. In summer, it basks as contentedly on its green knoll; green grass, with the daisy wagging its head in the soft wind, runs up to the very door of the porch. But although solitary enough—so solitary, that if you are asked to dine with your nearest neighbour you must mount and ride—there are many more huts about than those we have seen nestling on the shore beneath the smooth green plateau on which sheep are feeding. If you walk along to the west,—and a rough path it is, for your course is over broken boulders,—you come on a

little bay with an eagle's nest of a castle perched on a cliff, and there you will find a school-house and a half-a-dozen huts, the blue smoke steaming out of the crannies in the walls and roofs. Dark pyramids of peat are standing about, sheep and cows are feeding on the bits of pasture, gulls are weaving their eternal dances above, and during the day the school-room is murmuring like a bee-hive—only a much less pleasant task than the making of honey is going on within. Behind the house to the east, hidden by the broken ground and the masses of birch-wood, is another collection of huts; and in one of these lives the most interesting man in the place. He is an old pensioner, who has seen service in different quarters of the world; and frequently have I carried him a string of pigtail, and shared his glass of usquebaugh, and heard him, as he sat on a stone in the sunshine, tell tales of barrack life in Jamaica; of woody wildernesses filled with gorgeous undergrowth, of parasites that climbed like fluttering tongues of fire, and of the noisy towns of monkeys and parrots in the upper branches. I have heard him also severely critical on the different varieties of rum.

Of every fiery compound he had a catholic appreciation, but rum was his special favourite—being to him what a Greek text was to Porson, or an old master to Sir George Beaumont. So that you see, although Mr M'Ian's house was in a sense solitary, yet it was not altogether bereaved of the sight and sense of human habitations. On the farm there were existing perhaps, women and children included, some sixty souls; and to these the relation of the master was peculiar, and perhaps without a parallel in the island.

When, nearly half-a-century ago, Mr M'Ian left the army and became tacksman, he found cotters on his farm, and thought their presence as much a matter of course as that limpets should be found upon his rocks. They had their huts, for which they paid no rent; they had their patches of corn and potato ground, for which they paid no rent. There they had always been, and there, so far as Mr M'Ian was concerned, they would remain. He had his own code of generous old-fashioned ethics, to which he steadily adhered; and the man who was hard on the poor, who would dream of driving them from the places in which they were born,

seemed to him to break the entire round of the Commandments. Consequently the huts still smoked on the hem of the shore and among the clumps of birch-wood. The children who played on the green when he first became tacksman grew up in process of time, and married; and on these occasions he not only sent them something on which to make merry withal, but he gave them—what they valued more—his personal presence; and he made it a point of honour, when the ceremony was over, to dance the first reel with the bride. When old men or children were sick, cordials and medicines were sent from the house; when old man or child died, Mr M'Ian never failed to attend the funeral. He was a Justice of the Peace; and when disputes arose amongst his own cotters, or amongst the cotters of others—when, for instance, Katy M'Lure accused Effie M'Kean of stealing potatoes; when Red Donald raged against Black Peter on some matter relating to the sale of a dozen lambs; when Mary, in her anger at the loss of her sweetheart, accused Betty (to whom said sweetheart had transferred his allegiance) of the most flagrant breaches of morality—the contending parties were

sure to come before my friend; and many a rude court of justice I have seen him hold at the door of his porch. Arguments were heard *pro* and *con*, witnesses were examined, evidence was duly sifted and weighed, judgment was made, and the case dismissed; and I believe these decisions gave in the long run as much satisfaction as those delivered in Westminster or the Edinburgh Parliament-House. Occasionally, too, a single girl or shepherd, with whose character liberties were being taken, would be found standing at the porch-door anxious to make oath that they were innocent of the guilt or the impropriety laid to their charge. Mr M'Ian would come out and hear the story, make the party assert his or her innocence on oath, and deliver a written certificate to the effect that in his presence, on such and such a day, so and so had sworn that certain charges were unfounded, false, and malicious. Armed with this certificate, the aspersed girl or shepherd would depart in triumph. He or she had passed through the ordeal by oath, and nothing could touch them farther.

Mr M'Ian paid rent for the entire farm; but to him the cotters paid no rent, either for their huts

or for their patches of corn and potato ground. But the cotters were by no means merely pensioners — taking, and giving nothing in return. The most active of the girls were maids of various degree in Mr M'Ian's house; the cleverest and strongest of the lads acted as shepherds, &c.; and these of course received wages. The grown men amongst the cotters were generally at work in the south, or engaged in fishing expeditions, during summer; so that the permanent residents on the farm were chiefly composed of old men, women, and children. When required, Mr M'Ian demands the services of these people just as he would the services of his household servants, and they comply quite as readily. If the crows are to be kept out of the corn, or the cows out of the turnip-field, an urchin is remorselessly reft away from his games and companions. If a boat is out of repair, old Dugald is deputed to the job, and when his task is completed, he is rewarded with ten minutes' chat and a glass of spirits up at the house. When fine weather comes, every man, woman, and child is ordered to the hay-field, and Mr M'Ian potters amongst them the whole day, and takes care that

no one shirks his duty. When his corn or barley is ripe the cotters cut it, and when the harvest operations are completed, he gives the entire cotter population a dance and harvest-home. But between Mr M'Ian and his cotters no money passes; by a tacit understanding he is to give them house, corn-ground, potato-ground, and they are to remunerate him with labour.

Mr M'Ian, it will be seen, is a conservative, and hates change; and the social system by which he is surrounded wears an ancient and patriarchal aspect to a modern eye. It is a remnant of the system of clanship. The relation of cotter and tacksman, which I have described, is a bit of antiquity quite as interesting as the old castle on the crag—nay, *more* interesting, because we value the old castle mainly in virtue of its representing an ancient form of life, and here is yet lingering a fragment of the ancient form of life itself. You dig up an ancient tool or weapon in a moor, and place it carefully in a museum: here, as it were, is the ancient tool or weapon in actual use. No doubt Mr M'Ian's system has grave defects: it perpetuates comparative wretchedness on the part of

the cotters, it paralyses personal exertion, it begets an ignoble contentment; but on the other hand it sweetens sordid conditions, so far as they can be sweetened, by kindliness and good services. If Mr M'Ian's system is bad, he makes the best of it, and draws as much comfort and satisfaction out of it, both for himself and for others, as is perhaps possible.

Mr M'Ian's speech was as old-fashioned as he was himself; ancient matters turned up on his tongue just as ancient matters turned up on his farm. You found an old grave or an old implement on the one, you found an old proverb or an old scrap of a Gaelic poem on the other. After staying with him some ten days, I intimated my intention of paying a visit to my friend the Landlord—with whom Fellowes was then staying—who lived some forty miles off in the north-western portion of the island. The old gentleman was opposed to rapid decisions and movements, and asked me to remain with him yet another week. When he found I was resolute he glanced at the weather-gleam, and the troops of mists gathering on Cuchullin, muttering as he did so, "'Make ready my galley,' said the king, 'I shall

sail for Norway on Wednesday.' 'Will you,' said the wind, who, flying about, had overheard what was said, 'you had better ask my leave first.'"

Between the Landlord and M'Ian there were many likenesses and divergences. Both were Skye-men by birth, both had the strongest love for their native island, both had the management of human beings, both had shrewd heads, and hearts of the kindest texture. But at this point the likenesses ended, and the divergences began. Mr M'Ian had never been out of the three kingdoms. The Landlord had spent the best part of his life in India, was more familiar with huts of ryots, topes of palms, tanks in which the indigo plant was steeping, than with the houses of Skye cotters and the processes of sheep-farming. He knew the streets of Benares or Delhi better than he knew the streets of London; and, when he first came home, Hindostanee would occasionally jostle Gaelic on his tongue. The Landlord too, was rich, would have been considered a rich man even in the southern cities; he was owner of many a mile of moorland, and the tides of more than one far-winding Loch rose and rippled on shores that called

him master. In my friend the Landlord there was a sort of contrariety, a sort of mixture or blending of opposite elements which was not without its fascination. He was in some respects a resident in two worlds. He liked motion; he had a magnificent scorn of distance: to him the world seemed comparatively small; and he would start from Skye to India with as much composure as other men would take the night train to London. He paid taxes in India and he paid taxes in Skye. His name was as powerful in the markets of Calcutta as it was at the Muir of Ord. He read the *Hurkaru* and the *Inverness Courier*. He had known the graceful salaam of the East, as he now knew the touched bonnets of his shepherds. And in living with him, in talking with him, one was now reminded of the green western island on which sheep fed, anon of tropic heats, of pearl and gold, of mosque and pinnacle glittering above belts of palm-trees. In his company you were in imagination travelling backwards and forwards. You made the overland route twenty times a day. Now you heard the bagpipe, now the monotonous beat of the tom-tom and the keen clash of silver

cymbals. You were continually passing backwards and forwards, as I have said. You were in the West with your half-glass of bitters in the morning, you were in the East with the curry at dinner. Both Mr M'Ian and the Landlord had the management of human beings, but their methods of management were totally different. Mr M'Ian accepted matters as he found them, and originating nothing, changing nothing, contrived to make life for himself and others as pleasant as possible. The Landlord, when he entered on the direction of his property, exploded every ancient form of usage, actually *ruled* his tenants; would permit no factor, middle-man, or go-between; met them face to face, and had it out with them. The consequence was that the poor people were at times sorely bewildered. They received their orders and carried them out, with but little sense of the ultimate purpose of the Landlord—just as the sailor, ignorant of the principles of navigation, pulls ropes and reefs sails and does not discover that he gains much thereby, the same sea-crescent being around him day by day, but in due time a cloud rises on the horizon, and he is in port at last.

As M'Ian had predicted, I could only move from his house if the weather granted permission; and this permission the weather did not seem disposed to grant. For several days it rained as I had never seen it rain before; a waterspout, too had burst up among the hills, and the stream came down in mighty flood. There was great hubbub at the house. Mr M'Ian's hay, which was built in large stacks in the valley meadows, was in danger, and the fiery cross was sent through the cotters. Up to the hay-fields every available man was despatched with carts and horses, to remove the stacks to some spot where the waters could not reach them; while at the bridge nearer the house women and boys were stationed with long poles, and what rudely-extemporised implements Celtic ingenuity could suggest, to intercept and fish out piles and trusses which the thievish stream was carrying away with it seaward. These piles and trusses would at least serve for the bedding of cattle. For three days the rainy tempest continued; at last, on the fourth, mist and rain rolled up like a vast curtain in heaven, and then again were visible the clumps of birch-wood, and the bright sea and the smoking

hills, and far away on the ocean floor Rum and Canna, without a speck of cloud on them, sleeping in the coloured calmness of early afternoon. This uprising of the elemental curtain was, so far as the suddenness of the effect was concerned, like the uprising of the curtain of the pantomime on the transformation scene—all at once a dingy, sodden world had become a brilliant one, and all the newly-revealed colour and brilliancy promised to be permanent.

Of this happy change in the weather I of course took immediate advantage. About five o'clock in the afternoon my dog-cart was brought to the door; and after a parting cup with Mr M'Ian—who pours a libation both to his arriving and his departing guest—I drove away on my journey to remote Portree, and to the unimagined country that lay beyond Portree, but which I knew held Dunvegan, Duntulm, Macleod's Tables, and Quirang. I drove up the long glen with a pleasant exhilaration of spirit. I felt grateful to the sun, for he had released me from rainy captivity. The drive, too, was pretty; the stream came rolling down in foam, the smell of the wet birch-trees was in the brilliant air, every moun-

tain-top was strangely and yet softly distinct; and looking back, there were the blue Cuchullins looking after me, as if bidding me farewell! At last I reached the top of the glen, and emerged on a high plateau of moorland, in which were dark inky tarns with big white water-lilies on them; and skirting across the plateau I dipped down on the parliamentary road, which, like a broad white belt, surrounds Skye. Better road to drive on you will not find in the neighbourhood of London itself! and just as I was descending, I could not help pulling up. The whole scene was of the extremest beauty — exquisitely calm, exquisitely coloured. On my left was a little lake with a white margin of water-lilies, a rocky eminence throwing a shadow half-way across it. Down below, on the sea-shore, was the farm of Knock, with white outhouses and pleasant patches of cultivation, the school-house, and the church, while on a low spit of land the old castle of the Macdonalds was mouldering. Still lower down and straight away stretched the sleek blue Sound of Sleat, with not a sail or streak of steamer smoke to break its vast expanse, and with a whole congregation of clouds piled up on the

horizon, soon to wear their evening colours. I let the sight slowly creep into my study of imagination, so that I might be able to reproduce it at pleasure; that done, I drove down to Isle Oronsay by pleasant sloping stages of descent, with green hills on right and left, and along the roadside, like a guard of honour, the purple stalks of the foxglove.

The evening sky was growing red above me when I drove into Isle Oronsay, which consists of perhaps fifteen houses in all. It sits on the margin of a pretty bay, in which the cry of the fisher is continually heard, and into which the *Clansman* going to or coming from the south steams twice or thrice in the week. At a little distance is a lighthouse with a revolving light,—an idle building during the day, but when night comes, awakening to full activity,—sending now a ray to Ardnamurchan, now piercing with a fiery arrow the darkness of Glenelg. In Isle Oronsay is a merchant's shop, in which every conceivable article may be obtained. At Isle Oronsay the post-runner drops a bag, as he hies on to Armadale Castle. At Isle Oronsay I supped with my friend Mr Fraser. From him

I learned that the little village had been, like M'Ian's house, fiercely scourged by rains. On the supper-table was a dish of trouts. "Where do you suppose I procured these?" he asked. "In one of your burns, I suppose." "No such thing; I found them in my potato-field." "In your potato-field! How came that about?" "Why, you see the stream, swollen by three days' rain, broke over a potato-field of mine on the hill-side and carried the potatoes away, and left these plashing in pool and runnel. The Skye streams have a slight touch of honesty in them!" I smiled at the conceit, and expounded to my host the law of compensation which pervades the universe, of which I maintained the trouts on the table were a shining example. Mr Fraser assented; but held that Nature was a poor valuator—that her knowledge of the doctrine of equivalents was slightly defective—that the trouts were well enough, but no reimbursement for the potatoes that were gone.

Next morning I resumed my journey. The road, so long as it skirted the sea-shore, was pretty enough; but the sea-shore it soon left, and entered a waste of brown monotonous moorland. The

country round about abounds in grouse, and was the favourite shooting-ground of the late Lord Macdonald. . By the road-side his lordship had erected a stable and covered the roof with tin; and so at a distance it flashed as if the Koh-i-noor had been dropped by accident in that dismal region. As I went along, the hills above Broadford began to rise; then I drove down the slope, on which the market was held—the tents all struck, but the stakes yet remaining in the ground—and after passing the six houses, the lime-kiln, the church, and the two merchants' shops, I pulled up at the inn door, and sent the horse round to the stable to feed and to rest an hour.

After leaving Broadford the traveller drives along the margin of the ribbon of salt water which flows between Skye and the Island of Scalpa. Up this narrow sound the steamer never passes, and it is only navigated by the lighter kinds of sailing craft. Scalpa is a hilly island of some three or four miles in length, by one and a half in breadth, is gray-green in colour, and as treeless as the palm of your hand. It has been the birth-place of many soldiers. After passing Scalpa the

road ascends; and you notice as you drive along that during the last hour or so the frequent streams have changed colour. In the southern portion of the island they come down as if the hills ran sherry —here they are pale as shallow sea-water. This difference of hue arises of course from a difference of bed. About Broadford they come down through the mossy moorland, here they run over marble. Of marble the island is full; and it is not impossible that the sculptors of the twentieth century will patronise the quarries of Strath and Kyle rather than the quarries of Carrara. But wealth is needed to lay bare these mineral treasures. The fine qualities of Skye marble will never be obtained until they are laid open by a golden pickaxe.

Once you have passed Scalpa you approach Lord Macdonald's deer forest. You have turned the flank of the Cuchullins now, and are taking them in rear, and you skirt their bases very closely too. The road is full of wild ascents and descents, and on your left, for a couple of miles or so, you are in continual presence of bouldered hill-side sloping away upward to some invisible peak, overhanging wall of wet black precipice, far-off serrated ridge that cuts

the sky like a saw. Occasionally these mountain forms open up and fall back, and you see the sterilest valleys running no man knows whither. Altogether the hills here have a strange weird look. Each is as closely seamed with lines as the face of a man of a hundred, and these myriad reticulations are picked out with a pallid gray-green, as if through some mineral corrosion. Passing along you are strangely impressed with the idea that some vast chemical experiment has been going on for some thousands of years; that the region is nature's laboratory, and that down these wrinkled hill-fronts she had spilt her acids and undreamed-of combinations. You never think of verdure in connexion with that net-work of gray-green, but only of rust, or of some metallic discoloration. You cannot help fancying that if a sheep fed on one of those hill-sides it would to a certainty be poisoned. Altogether the sight is very grand, very impressive, and very uncomfortable, and it is with the liveliest satisfaction that, tearing down one of the long descents, you turn your back on the mountain monsters, and behold in front the green Island of Raasay, with its imposing modern

mansion, basking in sunshine. It is like passing from the world of the gnomes to the world of men.

I have driven across Lord Macdonald's deer forest in sunshine and in rain, and am constrained to confess that, under the latter atmospherical condition, the scenery is the more imposing. Some months ago I drove in the mail-gig from Sligachan to Broadford. There was a high wind, the sun was bright, and consequently a great *carry* and flight of sunny vapours. All at once, too, every half-hour or so, the turbulent brightness of wind and cloud was extinguished by fierce squalls of rain. You could see the coming rain-storm blown out on the wind toward you like a sheet of muslin cloth. On it came racing in its strength and darkness, the long straight watery lines pelting on road and rock, churning in marsh and pool. Over the unhappy mail-gig it rushed, bidding defiance to plaid or waterproof cape, and wetting every one to the skin. The mail jogged on as best it could through the gloom and the fury, and then the sunshine came again making to glisten, almost too brightly for the eye, every rain-pool on the road. In the sunny intervals there was a great race and

hurry of towered vapour, as I said; and when a shining mass smote one of the hill-sides, or shrouded for a while one of the more distant serrated crests, the concussion was so palpable to the eye that the ear felt defrauded, and silence seemed unnatural. And when the vast mass passed onward to impinge on some other mountain barrier, it was singular to notice by what slow degrees, with what evident reluctance the laggard skirts combed off. All these effects of rain and windy vapour I remember vividly, and I suppose that the vividness was partly due to the lamentable condition of a fellow-traveller. He was a meek-faced man of fifty. He was dressed in sables, his swallow-tailed coat was thread-bare, and withal seemed made for a smaller man. There was an uncomfortable space between the wrists of his coat and his black-thread gloves. He wore a hat, and against the elements had neither the protection of plaid nor umbrella. No one knew him, to no one did he explain his business. To my own notion he was bound for a funeral at some place beyond Portree. He was not a clergyman—he might have been a schoolmaster who had become green-moulded in some

out-of-the-way locality. Of course one or two of the rainy squalls settled the meek-faced man in the thread-bare sables. Emerging from one of these he resembled a draggled rook, and the rain was pouring from the brim of his pulpy hat as it might from the eaves of a cottage. A passenger handed him his spirit-flask, the meek-faced man took a hearty pull, and returning it, said plaintively, "I 'm but poorly clad, sir, for this God-confounded climate." I think often of the utterance of the poor fellow: it was the only thing he said all the way; and when I think of it, I see again the rain blown out towards me on the wind like a waving sheet of muslin cloth, and the rush, the concussion, the upbreak, and the slow reluctant trailing off from the hill-side of the sunny cloud. The poor man's plaintive tone is the anchor which holds these things in my memory.

The forest is of course treeless. Nor are deer seen there frequently. Although I have crossed it frequently, only once did I get a sight of antlers. Carefully I crept up, sheltering myself behind a rocky haunch of the hill to where the herd were lying, and then rushed out upon them with a

halloo. In an instant they were on their feet, and away went the beautiful creatures, doe and fawn, a stag with branchy head leading. They dashed across a torrent, crowned an eminence one by one and disappeared. Such a sight is witnessed but seldom; and the traveller passing through the brown desolation sees usually no sign of life. In Lord Macdonald's deer forest neither trees nor deer are visible.

When once you get quit of the forest you come on a shooting-box, perched on the sea-shore; then you pass the little village of Sconser; and, turning the sharp flank of a hill, drive along Loch Sligachan to Sligachan Inn, about a couple of miles distant. This inn is a famous halting-place for tourists. There are good fishing streams about, I am given to understand, and through Glen Sligachan you can find your way to Camasunary, and take the boat from thence to Loch Coruisk, as we did. It was down this glen that the messenger was to have brought the tobacco to our peculiar friend. If you go you may perhaps find his skeleton scientifically articulated by the carrion crow and the raven. From the inn door the

ridges of the Cuchullins are seen wildly invading the sky, and in closer proximity there are other hills which cannot be called beautiful. Monstrous, abnormal, chäotic, they resemble the other hills on the earth's surface, as Hindoo deities resemble human beings. The mountain, whose sharp flank you turned after you passed Sconser, can be inspected leisurely now, and is to my mind supremely ugly. In summer it is red as copper, with great ragged patches of verdure upon it, which look by all the world as if the coppery mass had *rusted* green. On these green patches cattle feed from March to October. You bait at Sligachan,—can dine on trout which a couple of hours before were darting hither and thither in the stream, if you like,—and then drive leisurely along to Portree while the setting sun is dressing the wilderness in gold and rose. And all the way the Cuchullins follow you; the wild irregular outline, which no familiarity can stale, haunts you at Portree, as it does in nearly every quarter of Skye.

Portree folds two irregular ranges of white houses, the one range rising steeply above the other, around a noble bay, the entrance to which is

guarded by rocky precipices. At a little distance the houses are white as shells, and as in summer they are all set in the greenness of foliage the effect is strikingly pretty; and if the sense of prettiness departs to a considerable extent on a closer acquaintance, there is yet enough left to gratify you so long as you remain there, and to make it a pleasant place to think about when you are gone. The lower range of houses consists mainly of warehouses and fish-stores; the upper, of the main hotel, the two banks, the court-house, and the shops. A pier runs out into the bay, and here, when the state of tide permits, comes the steamer, on its way to or from Stornoway and unlades. Should the tide be low the steamer lies to in the bay, and her cargo and passengers come to shore by means of boats. She usually arrives at night; and at low tide, the burning of coloured lights at the mast-heads, the flitting hither and thither of busy lanterns, the pier boats coming and going with illumined wakes, and ghostly fires on the oar-blades, the clatter of chains and the shock of the crank hoisting the cargo out of the hold, the general hubbub and storm of Gaelic

shouts and imprecations make the arrival at once picturesque and impressive. In the bay the yacht of the tourist is continually lying, and at the hotel door his dog-cart is continually departing or arriving. In the hotel parties arrange to visit Quirang or the Storr, and on the evenings of market-days, in the large public rooms, farmers and cattle-dealers sit over tumblers of smoking punch and discuss noisily the prices and the qualities of stock. Besides the hotel and the pier, the banks, and the court-house already mentioned, there are other objects of interest in the little island town—three churches, a post-office, a poor-house, and a cloth manufactory. And it has more than meets the eye—one of the Jameses landed here on a visitation of the Isles, Prince Charles was here on his way to Raasay, Dr Johnson and Boswell were here; and somewhere on the green hill on which the pretty church stands, a murderer is buried—the precise spot of burial is unknown, and so the entire hill gets the credit that of right belongs only to a single yard of it. In Portree the tourist seldom abides long; he passes through it as a fortnight before he passed through Oban. It does not

seem to the visitor a specially remarkable place, but everything is relative in this world. It is an event for the Islesman at Dunvegan or the Point of Sleat to go to Portree, just as it is an event for a Yorkshireman to go to London.

When you drive out of Portree you are in Macleod's country, and you discover that the character of the scenery has changed. Looking back, the Cuchullins are wild and pale on the horizon, but everything around is brown, softly-swelling, and monotonous. The hills are round and low, and except when an occasional boulder crops out on their sides like a wart, are smooth as a seal's back. They are gray-green in colour, and may be grazed to the top. Expressing once to a shepherd my admiration of the Cuchullins, the man replied, while he swept with his arm the entire range, "There's no feeding there for twenty wethers!" here, however, there is sufficient feeding to compensate for any lack of beauty. About three miles out of Portree you come upon a solitary-looking school-house by the wayside, and a few yards farther to a division of the roads. A finger-post informs you that the road

to the right leads to Uig, that to the left to Dunvegan. As I am at present bound for Dunvegan, I skirr along to the left, and after an hour's drive come in sight of blue Loch Snizort, with Skeabost sitting whitely on its margin. Far inland from the broad Minch, like one of those wavering swords which mediæval painters place in the hands of archangels, has Snizort come wandering; and it is the curious mixture of brine and pasture-land, of mariner life and shepherd life, which gives its charm to this portion of the island. The Lochs are narrow, and you almost fancy a strong-lunged man could shout across. The sea-gull skims above the feeding sheep, the shepherd can watch the sail of the sloop, laden with meal, creeping from point to point. In the spiritual atmosphere of the country the superstitions of ocean and moorland mingle like two odours. Above all places which I have seen in Skye, Skeabost has a lowland look. There are almost no turf-huts to be seen in the neighbourhood; the houses are built of stone and lime, and are tidily white-washed. The hills are low and smooth; on the lower slopes corn and wheat are grown; and

from a little distance the greenness of cultivation looks like a palpable smile—a strange contrast to the monotonous district through which, for an hour or so, you have driven. As you pass the inn, and drive across the bridge, you notice that there is an island in the stony stream, and that this island is covered with ruins. The Skye-man likes to bury his dead in islands, and this one in the stream at Skeabost is a crowded cemetery. I forded the stream, and wandered for an hour amongst the tombs and broken stones. There are traces of an ancient chapel on the island, but tradition does not even make a guess at its builder's name or the date of its erection. There are old slabs, lying sideways, with the figures of recumbent men with swords in their hands, and inscriptions—indecipherable now—carved on them. There is the grave of a Skye clergyman who, if his epitaph is to be trusted, was a burning and a shining light in his day—a gospel candle irradiating the Hebridean darkness. I never saw a churchyard so mounded, and so evidently over-crowded. Here laird, tacksman, and cotter elbow each other in death. Here no one will make way for a new-comer, or give the wall to

his neighbour. And standing in the little ruined island of silence and the dead, with the river perfectly audible on either side, one could not help thinking what a picturesque sight a Highland funeral would be, creeping across the moors with wailing pipe-music, fording the river, and his bearers making room for the dead man amongst the older dead as best they could. And this sight, I am told, may be seen any week in the year. To this island all the funerals of the country-side converge. Standing there, too, one could not help thinking that this space of silence, girt by river noises, would be an *eerie* place by moonlight. The broken chapel, the carved slabs lying sideways, as if the dead man beneath had grown restless and turned himself, and the head-stones jutting out of the mounded soil at every variety of angle, would appal in the ink of shadow and the silver of moonbeam. In such circumstances one would hear something more in the stream as it ran past than the mere breaking of water on stones.

After passing the river and the island of graves you drive down between hedges to Skeabost church, school, post-office, and manse, and thereafter you

climb the steep hill towards Bernesdale and its colony of turf-huts ; and when you reach the top you have a noble view of the flat blue Minch, and the Skye headlands, each precipitous, abrupt, and reminding you somehow of a horse which has been suddenly reined back to its haunches. The flowing lines of those headlands suggest an onward motion, and then, all at once, they shrink back upon themselves, as if they feared the roar of breakers and the smell of the brine. But the grand vision is not of long duration, for the road descends rapidly towards Taynlone Inn. In my descent I beheld two bare-footed and bare-headed girls yoked to a harrow, and dragging it up and down a small plot of delved ground.

Sitting in the inn I began to remember me how frequently I had heard in the south of the destitution of the Skye people and the discomfort of the Skye hut. During my wanderings I had the opportunity of visiting several of these dwellings, and seeing how matters were transacted within. Frankly speaking, the Highland hut is not a model edifice. It is open to wind, and almost always pervious to rain. An old bottomless herring-firkin stuck in the roof

usually serves for chimney, but the blue peat-reek disdains that aperture, and steams wilfully through the door and the crannies in the walls and roof. The interior is seldom well-lighted—what light there is proceeding rather from the orange glow of the peat-fire, on which a large pot is simmering, than from the narrow pane with its great bottle-green bull's-eye. The rafters which support the roof are black and glossy with soot, as you can notice by sudden flashes of firelight. The sleeping accommodation is limited, and the beds are composed of heather or ferns. The floor is the beaten earth, the furniture is scanty; there is hardly ever a chair—stools and stones, worn smooth by the usage of several generations, have to do instead. One portion of the hut is not unfrequently a byre, and the breath of the cow is mixed with the odour of peat-reek, and the *baa* of the calf mingles with the wranglings and swift ejaculations of the infant Highlanders. In such a hut as this there are sometimes three generations. The mother stands knitting outside, the children are scrambling on the floor with the terrier and the poultry, and a ray of cloudy sunshine from the narrow pane smites the

silver hairs of the grandfather near the fire, who is mending fishing-nets against the return of his son-in-law from the south. Am I inclined to lift my hands in horror at witnessing such a dwelling? Certainly not. I have only given one side of the picture. The hut I speak of nestles beneath a rock, on the top of which dances the ash-tree and the birch. The emerald mosses on its roof are softer and richer than the velvets of kings. Twenty yards down that path you will find a well that needs no ice in the dog-days. At a little distance, from rocky shelf to shelf, trips a mountain burn, with abundance of trout in the brown pools. At the distance of a mile is the sea, which is not allowed to ebb and flow in vain; for in the smoke there is a row of fishes drying; and on the floor a curly-headed urchin of three years or thereby is pommeling the terrier with the scarlet claw of a lobster. Methought, too, when I entered I saw beside the door a heap of oyster shells. Within the hut there is good food, if a little scant at times; without there is air that will call colour back to the cheek of an invalid, pure water, play, exercise, work. That the people are healthy, you

may see from their strong frames, brown faces, and the age to which many attain; that they are happy and light-hearted, the shouts of laughter that ring round the peat-fire of an evening may be taken as sufficient evidence. I protest I cannot become pathetic over the Highland hut. I have sat in these turfen dwellings, amid the surgings of blue smoke, and received hospitable welcome, and found amongst the inmates good sense, industry, family affection, contentment, piety, happiness. And when I have heard philanthropists, with more zeal than discretion, maintain that these dwellings are a disgrace to the country in which they are found, I have thought of districts of great cities which I have seen,—within the sound of the rich man's chariot wheels, within hearing of multitudinous Sabbath bells—of evil scents and sights and sounds; of windows stuffed with rags; of female faces that look out on you as out of a sadder Inferno than that of Dante's; of faces of men containing the *débris* of the entire decalogue, faces which hurt you more than a blow would: of infants poisoned with gin, of children bred for the prison and the hulks. Depend upon it there are

worse odours than peat smoke, worse next-door neighbours than a cow or a brood of poultry ; and although a couple of girls dragging a harrow be hardly in accordance with our modern notions, yet we need not forget that there are worse employment for girls than even that. I do not stand up for the Highland hut ; but in one of these smoky cabins I would a thousand-fold rather spend my days than in the Cowgate of Edinburgh, or in one of the streets that radiate from Seven Dials.

After travelling three or four days, I beheld on the other side of a long, blue, river-like loch, the house of the Landlord. From the point at which I now paused, a boat could have taken me across in half an hour, but as the road wound round the top of the Loch, I had yet some eight or ten miles to drive before my journey was accomplished. Meantime the Loch was at ebb and the sun was setting. On the hill-side, on my left as I drove, stretched a long street of huts covered with smoky wreaths, and in front of each a strip of cultivated ground ran down to the road which skirted the shore. Potatoes grew in one strip or lot, turnips in a second, corn in a third, and as these crops were in

different stages of advancement, the entire hillside, from the street of huts downward, resembled one of those counterpanes which thrifty housewifes manufacture by sewing together patches of different patterns. Along the road running at the back of the huts a cart was passing; on the moory hill behind, a flock of sheep, driven by men and dogs, was contracting and expanding itself like quicksilver. The women were knitting at the hut doors, the men were at work in the cultivated patches in front. On all this scene of cheerful and fortunate industry, on men and women, on turnips, oats, and potatoes, on cottages set in azure films of peat-reek, the rosy light was striking—making a pretty spectacle enough. From the whole hill-side breathed peace, contentment, happiness, and a certain sober beauty of usefulness. Man and nature seemed in perfect agreement and harmony—man willing to labour, nature to yield increase. Down to the head of the Loch the road sloped rapidly, and at the very head a small village had established itself. It contained an inn, a school-house, in which divine service was held on Sundays; a smithy, a merchant's shop—all traders

are called *merchants* in Skye—and, by the side of a stream which came brawling down from rocky steep to steep, stood a corn mill, the big wheel lost in a watery mist of its own raising, the door and windows dusty with meal. Behind the village lay a stretch of black moorland intersected by drains and trenches, and from the black huts which seemed to have grown out of the moor, and the spaces of sickly green here and there, one could see that the desolate and forbidding region had its colonists, and that they were valiantly attempting to wring a sustenance out of it. Who were the squatters on the black moorland? Had they accepted their hard conditions as a matter of choice, or had they been banished there by a superior power? Did the dweller in those outlying huts bear the same relation to the villagers, or the flourishing cotters on the hill-side, that the gipsy bears to the English peasant, or the red Indian to the Canadian farmer? I had no one to inform me at the time; meanwhile the sunset fell on these remote dwellings, lending them what beauty and amelioration of colour it could, making a drain sparkle for a moment, turning a far-off

pool into gold leaf, and rendering, by contrast of universal warmth and glow, yet more beautiful the smoke which swathed the houses. Yet after all the impression made upon one was cheerless enough. Sunset goes but a little way in obviating human wretchedness. It fires the cottage window, but it cannot call to life the corpse within; it can sparkle on the chain of a prisoner, but with all its sparkling it does not make the chain one whit the lighter. Misery is often picturesque, but the picturesqueness is in the eyes of others, not in her own. The black moorland and the banished huts abode in my mind during the remainder of my drive.

Everything about a man is characteristic, more or less; and in the house of the Landlord I found that singular mixture of hemispheres which I had before noticed in his talk and in his way of looking at times. His house was plain enough externally, but its furniture was curious and far-brought. The interior of his porch was adorned with heads of stags and tusks of elephants. He would show you Highland relics, and curiosities from sacked Eastern palaces. He had the tiny porcelain cup

out of which Prince Charles drank tea at Kingsburgh, and the signet ring which was stripped from the dead fingers of Tippoo Saib. In his gun-room were modern breech-loaders and revolvers, and matchlocks from China and Nepaul. On the walls were Lochaber axes, claymores, and targets that might have seen service at Inverlochy, hideous creases, Afghan daggers, curiously-curved swords, scabbards thickly crusted with gems. In the library the last new novel leaned against the "Institutes of Menu." On the drawing-room table, beside *carte-de-visite* books, were ivory card-cases wrought by the patient Hindoo artificer as finely as we work our laces, Chinese puzzles that baffled all European comprehension, and comical squab-faced deities in silver and bronze. While the Landlord was absent, I could fancy these strangely-assorted articles striking one with a sense of incongruity: but when at home, each seemed a portion of himself. He was related as closely to the Indian god as to Prince Charles's cup. The ash and birch of the Highlands danced before his eyes, the palm stood in his imagination and memory.

And then he surrounded himself with all kinds

of pets, and lived with them on the most intimate terms. When he entered the breakfast-room his terriers barked and frisked and jumped about him; his great black hare-hound, Maida, got up from the rug on which it had been basking and thrust its sharp nose into his hand; his canaries broke into emulous music, as if sunshine had come into the room; the parrot in the porch clambered along the cage with horny claws, settled itself on its perch, bobbed its head up and down for a moment, and was seized with hooping-cough. When he went out the black hare-hound followed at his heel; the peacock, strutting on the gravel in the shelter of the larches, unfurled its starry fan; in the stable his horses turned round to smell his clothes and to have their foreheads stroked: melodious thunder broke from the dog-kennel when he came: and at his approach his falcons did not withdraw haughtily, as if in human presence there was profanation; they listened to his voice, and a gentler something tamed for a moment the fierce cairngorms of their eyes. When others came near they ruffled their plumage and uttered sharp cries of anger.

After breakfast it was his habit to carry the parrot out to a long iron garden-seat in front of the house—where, if sunshine was to be had at all, you were certain to find it—and placing the cage beside him, smoke a cheroot. The parrot would clamber about the cage, suspended head downwards would take crafty stock of you with an eye which had perhaps looked out on the world for a century or so, and then, righting itself, peremptorily insist that Polly should put on the kettle, and that the boy should shut up the grog. On one special morning, while the Landlord was smoking and the parrot whooping and whistling, several men, dressed in rough pilot cloth which had seen much service and known much darning, came along the walk and respectfully uncovered. Returning their salutation, the Landlord threw away the end of his cheroot and went forward to learn their message. The conversation was in Gaelic: slow and gradual at first, it quickened anon, and broke into gusts of altercation; and on these occasions I noticed that the Landlord would turn impatiently on his heel, march a pace or two back to the house, and then, wheeling round,

return to the charge. He argued in the unknown tongue, gesticulated, was evidently impressing something on his auditors which they were unwilling to receive, for at intervals they would look in one another's faces,—a look plainly implying, "Did you ever hear the like?" and give utterance to a murmured *chit, chit, chit* of dissent and humble protestation. At last the matter got itself amicably settled, the deputation—each man making a short sudden duck before putting on his bonnet—withdrew, and the Landlord came back to the parrot, which had, now with one eye, now with another, been watching the proceeding. He sat down with a slight air of annoyance.

"These fellows are wanting more meal," he said, "and one or two are pretty deep in my books already."

"Do you, then, keep regular accounts with them?"

"Of course. I give nothing for nothing. I wish to do them as much good as I can. They are a good deal like my old ryots, only the ryot was more supple and obsequious."

"Where do your friends come from?" I asked.

"From the village over there," pointing across the narrow blue loch. "Pretty Polly! Polly!"

The parrot was climbing up and down the cage, taking hold of the wires with beak and claw as it did so.

"I wish to know something of your villagers. The cotters on the hill-side seem comfortable enough, but I wish to know something of the black land and the lonely huts behind."

"Oh," said he, laughing, "that is my penal settlement—I 'll drive you over to-morrow." He then got up, tossed a stone into the shrubbery, after which Maida dashed, thrust his hands into his breeches' pocket for a moment, and marched into the house.

Next morning we drove across to the village, and pretty enough it looked as we alighted. The big water-wheel of the mill whirred industrious music, flour flying about the door and windows. Two or three people were standing at the merchant's shop. At the smithy a horse was haltered, and within were brilliant showers of sparks and the merry clink of hammers. The sunshine made pure amber the pools of the tumbling burn, and in

one of these a girl was rinsing linen, the light touching her hair into a richer colour. Our arrival at the inn created some little stir. The dusty miller came out, the smith came to the door rubbing down his apron with a horny palm, the girl stood upright by the burn-side shading her eyes with her hand, one of the men at the merchant's shop went within to tell the news, the labourers in the fields round about stopped work to stare. The machine was no sooner put to rights and the horses taken round to the stable than the mistress of the house complained that the roof was leaky, and she and the Landlord went in to inspect the same. Left alone for a little, I could observe that, seeing my friend had arrived, the people were resolved to make some use of him, and here and there I noticed them laying down their crooked spades, and coming down towards the inn. One old woman, with a white handkerchief tied round her head, sat down on a stone opposite, and when the Landlord appeared—the matter of the leaky roof having been arranged—she rose and dropped a courtesy. She had a complaint to make, a benefit to ask, a wrong to be redressed. I could not, of

course, understand a word of the conversation, but curiously sharp and querulous was her voice, with a slight suspicion of the whine of the mendicant in it, and every now and then she would give a deep sigh, and smooth down her apron with both her hands. I suspect the old lady gained her object, for when the Landlord cracked his joke at parting the most curious sunshine of merriment came into the withered features, lighting them up and changing them, and giving one, for a flying second, some idea of what she must have been in her middle age, perhaps in her early youth, when she as well as other girls had a sweetheart.

In turn we visited the merchant's shop, the smithy, and the mill; then we passed the school-house—which was one confused murmur, the sharp voice of the teacher striking through at intervals—and turning up a narrow road, came upon the black region and the banished huts. The cultivated hill-side was shining in sunlight, the cottages smoking, the people at work in their crofts—everything looking blithe and pleasant; and under the bright sky and the happy weather the penal settlement did not look nearly so forbidding as it had

done when, under the sunset, I had seen it a few evenings previously. The houses were rude, but they seemed sufficiently weather-tight. Each was set down in a little oasis of cultivation, a little circle in which by labour the sour land had been coaxed into a smile of green; each small domain was enclosed by a low turfen wall, and on the top of one of these a wild goat-looking sheep was feeding, which, as we approached, jumped down with an alarmed bleat, and then turned to gaze on the intruders. The land was sour and stony, the dwellings framed of the rudest materials, and the people—for they all came forward to meet him, and at each turfen wall the Landlord held a *levée*—especially the older people, gave one the idea somehow of worn-out tools. In some obscure way they reminded one of bent and warped oars, battered spades, blunted pickaxes. On every figure was written hard, unremitting toil. Toil had twisted their frames, seamed and puckered their leathern faces, made their hands horny, bleached their grizzled locks. Your fancy had to run back along years and years of labour before it could arrive at the original boy or girl. Still they were

cheerful-looking after a sort, contented, and loquacious withal. The man took off his bonnet, the woman dropped her courtesy, before pouring into the Landlord's ear how the wall of the house wanted mending, how a neighbour's sheep had come into the corn, had been *driven* into the corn out of foul spite and envy it was suspected, how new seed would be required for next year's sowing, how the six missing fleeces had been found in the hut of the old soldier across the river, and all the other items which made up their world. And the Landlord, his black hound couched at his feet, would sit down on a stone, or lean against the turf wall and listen to the whole of it, and consult as to the best way to repair the decaying house, and discover how defendant's sheep came into complainant's corn, and give judgment, and promise new seed to old Donald, and walk over to the soldier's and pluck the heart out of the mystery of the missing fleeces. And going in and out amongst his people, his functions were manifold. He was not Landlord only—he was leech, lawyer, divine. He prescribed medicine, he set broken bones, and tied up sprained ankles; he was umpire in a hundred petty quarrels,

and damped out wherever he went every flame of wrath. Nor, when it was needed, was he without ghostly counsel. On his land he would permit no unbaptized child; if Donald was drunk and brawling at a fair, he would, when the inevitable headache and nausea were gone, drop in and improve the occasion, to Donald's much discomfiture and his many blushes; and with the bed-ridden woman, or the palsied man, who for years had sat in the corner of the hut as constantly as a statue sits within its niche—just where the motty sunbeam from the pane with its great knob of bottle-green struck him—he held serious conversations, and uttered words which come usually from the lips of a clergyman.

We then went through the cottages on the cultivated hill-side, and there another series of *levées* were held. One cotter complained that his neighbour had taken advantage of him in this or the other matter: another man's good name had been aspersed by a scandalous tongue, and ample apology must be made, else the sufferer would bring the asperser before the sheriff. Norman had borrowed for a day Neil's plough, had broken the

shaft, and when requested to make reparation, had refused in terms too opprobrious to be repeated. The man from Sleat who had a year or two ago come to reside in these parts, and with whom the world had gone prosperously, was minded at next fair to buy another cow—would he therefore be allowed to rent the croft which lay alongside the one which he already possessed? To these cotters the Landlord gave attentive ear, standing beside the turf dike, leaning against the walls of their houses, sitting down inside in the peat smoke—the children gathered together in the farthest corner, and regarding him with no little awe. And so he came to know all the affairs of his people—who was in debt, who was waging a doubtful battle with the world, who had money in the bank; and going daily amongst them he was continually engaged in warning, expostulation, encouragement, rebuke. Nor was he always sunshine: he was occasionally lightning too. The tropical tornado, which unroofs houses and splits trees, was within the possibilities of his moods as well as the soft wind which caresses the newly-yeaned lamb. Against greed, laziness, dishonesty, he flamed like a seven-times

heated furnace. When he found that argument had no effect on the obstinate or the pig-headed, he suddenly changed his tactics, and descended in a shower of *chaff*, which is to the Gael an unknown and terrible power, dissolving opposition as salt dissolves a snail.

The last cotter had been seen, the last *levée* had been held, and we then climbed up to the crown of the hill to visit the traces of an old fortification, or *düin*, as the Skye people call it. These ruins, and they are thickly scattered over the island, are supposed to be of immense antiquity—so old, that Ossian may have sung in each to a circle of Fingalian chiefs. When we reached the *düin*—a loose congregation of mighty stones, scattered in a circular form, with some rude remnants of an entrance and a covered way—we sat down, and the Landlord lighted a cheroot. Beneath lay the little village covered with smoke. Far away to the right, Skye stretched into ocean, pale headland after headland. In front, over a black wilderness of moor, rose the conical forms of Macleod's Tables, and one thought of the "restless bright Atlantic plain" beyond, the endless swell and shimmer of watery ridges, the

clouds of sea birds, the sudden glistening upheaval of a whale and its disappearance, the smoky trail of a steamer on the horizon, the tacking of white-sailed craft. On the left, there was nothing but moory wilderness and hill, with something on a slope flashing in the sunshine like a diamond. A falcon palpitating in the intense blue above, the hare-hound cocked her ears and looked out alertly, the Landlord with his field-glass counted the sheep feeding on the hill-side a couple of miles off. Suddenly he closed the glass, and lay back on the heather, puffing a column of white smoke into the air.

"I suppose," said I, "your going in and out amongst your tenants to-day is very much the kind of thing you used to do in India?"

"Exactly. I know these fellows, every man of them—and they know me. We get on very well together. I know everything they do. I know all their secrets, all their family histories, everything they wish, and everything they fear. I think I have done them some good since I came amongst them."

"But," said I, "I wish you to explain to me

your system of penal servitude, as you call it. In what respect do the people on the cultivated hill-side differ from the people in the black ground behind the village?"

"Willingly. But I must premise that the giving away of money in charity is, in nine cases out of ten, tantamount to throwing money into the fire. It does no good to the bestower: it does absolute harm to the receiver. You see I have taken the management of these people into my own hands. I have built a school-house for them—on which we will look in and overhaul on our way down—I have built a shop, as you see, a smithy, and a mill. I have done everything for them, and I insist that, when a man becomes my tenant, he shall pay me rent. If I did not so insist I should be doing an injury to myself and to him. The people on the hill-side pay me rent; not a man Jack of them is at this moment one farthing in arrears. The people down there in the black land behind the village, which I am anxious to reclaim, don't pay rent. They are broken men, broken sometimes by their own fault and laziness, sometimes by culpable imprudence, sometimes by stress

of circumstances. When I settle a man there I build him a house, make him a present of a bit of land, give him tools, should he require them, and set him to work. He has the entire control of all he can produce. He improves my land, and can, if he is industrious, make a comfortable living. I won't have a pauper on my place: the very sight of a pauper sickens me."

"But why do you call the black lands your penal settlement?"

Here the Landlord laughed. "Because, should any of the crofters on the hill-side, either from laziness or misconduct, fall into arrears, I transport him at once. I punish him by sending him among the people who pay no rent. It's like taking the stripes off a sergeant's arm and degrading him to the ranks; and if there is any spirit in the man he tries to regain his old position. I wish my people to respect themselves, and to hold poverty in horror."

"And do many get back to the hill-side again?"

"Oh, yes! and they are all the better for their temporary banishment. I don't wish residence there to be permanent in any case. When one of

these fellows gets on, makes a little money, I have him up here at once among the rent-paying people. I draw the line at a cow."

"How?"

"When a man by industry or by self-denial has saved money enough to buy a cow, I consider the black land is no longer the place for him. He is able to pay rent, and he must pay it. I brought an old fellow up here the other week, and very unwilling he was to come. He had bought himself a cow, and so I marched him up here at once. I wish to stir all these fellows up, to put into them a little honest pride and self-respect."

"And how do they take to your system?"

"Oh, they grumbled a good deal at first, and thought their lines were hard; but discovering that my schemes have been for their benefit, they are content enough now. In these black lands, you observe, I not only rear corn and potatoes, I rear and train men, which is the most valuable crop of all. But let us be going. I wish you to see my scholars. I think I have got one or two smart lads down there."

In a short time we reached the school-house, a

plain, substantial-looking building, standing midway between the inn and the banished huts. As it was arranged that neither schoolmaster nor scholar should have the slightest idea that they were to be visited that day, we were enabled to see the school in its ordinary aspect. When we entered the master came forward and shook hands with the Landlord, the boys pulled their red fore-locks, the girls dropped their best courtesies. Sitting down on a form I noted the bare walls, a large map hanging on one side, the stove with a heap of peats near it, the ink-smeared bench and the row of girls' heads, black, red, yellow, and brown, surmounting it, and the boys, barefooted and in tattered kilts, gathered near the window. The girls regarded us with a shy, curious gaze, which was not ungraceful; and in several of the freckled faces there was the rudiments of beauty, or of comeliness at least. The eyes of all, boys as well as girls, kept twinkling over our persons, taking silent note of everything. I don't think I ever before was the subject of so much curiosity. One was pricked all over by quick-glancing eyes as by pins. We had come to examine the school,

and the ball opened by a display of copy books. Opening these, we found pages covered with "*Emulation is a generous passion*," "*Emancipation does not make man*," in very fair and legible handwriting. Expressing our satisfaction, the schoolmaster bowed low, and the prickling of the thirty or forty curious eyes became yet more keen and rapid. The schoolmaster then called for those who wished to be examined in geography—very much as a colonel might seek volunteers for a forlorn hope—and in a trice six scholars, kilted, of various ages and sizes, but all shock-headed and ardent, were drawn up in line in front of the large map. A ruler was placed in the hand of a little fellow at the end, who, with his eyes fixed on the schoolmaster and his body bent forward eagerly, seemed as waiting the signal to start off in a race. "Number one, point out river Tagus." Number one charged the Peninsula with his ruler as ardently as his great-grandfather in all probability charged the French at Quebec. "Through what country does the Tagus flow?" "Portugal." "What is the name of the capital city?" "Lisbon." Num-

ber one having accomplished his devoir, the ruler was handed on to number two, who traced the course of the Danube, and answered several questions thereanent with considerable intelligence. Number five was a little fellow; he was asked to point out Portree, and as the Western Islands hung too high in the north for him to reach, he jumped at them. He went into the North Sea the first time, but on his second attempt he smote Skye with his ruler very neatly. Numbers three, four, and six acquitted themselves creditably—number four boggling a little deal about Constantinople—much to the vexation of the schoolmaster. Slates were then produced, and the six geographers—who were the cream of the school, I daresay—were prepared for arithmetical action. As I was examiner, and had no desire to get into deep waters, the efforts of my kilted friends were, at my request, confined to the good old rule of simple addition. The schoolmaster called out ten or eleven ranks of figures, and then cried *add*. Six swishes of the slate-pencil were heard, and then began the arithmetical tug of war. Each face was immediately hidden behind a slate, and we could

hear the quick tinkle of pencils. All at once there was a hurried swish, and the red-head, who had boggled about Constantinople, flashed round his slate on me with the summation fairly worked out. Flash went another slate, then another, till the six were held out. All the answers corresponded, and totting up the figures I found them correct. Then books were procured, and we listened to English reading. In a loud tone of voice, as if they were addressing some one on an opposite hill-side, and with barbarous intonation, the little fellows read off about a dozen sentences each. Now and again a big word brought a reader to grief, as a tall fence brings a steeple-chaser; now and again a reader went through a word as a hunter goes through a hedge which he cannot clear—but, on the whole, they deserved the commendation which they received. The Landlord expressed his satisfaction, and mentioned that he had left at the inn two baskets of gooseberries for the scholars. The schoolmaster again bowed; and although the eyes of the scholars were as bright and curious as before, they had laid their heads together, and were busily whispering now.

The schools in Skye bear the same relationship to the other educational establishments of the country that a turf-hut bears to a stone-and-lime cottage. These schools are scattered thinly up and down the Island, and the pupils are unable to attend steadily on account of the distances they have to travel, and the minor agricultural avocations in which they are at intervals engaged. The schoolmaster is usually a man of no surpassing intelligence or acquirement; he is wretchedly remunerated, and his educational aids and appliances, such as books, maps, &c., are defective. But still a turf-hut is better than no shelter, and a Skye school is better than no school at all. The school, for instance, which we had just visited, was an authentic light in the darkness. There boys and girls were taught reading, writing, and ciphering—plain and homely accomplishments it is true, but accomplishments that bear the keys of all the doors that lead to wealth and knowledge. The boy or girl who can read, write, and cast up accounts deftly, is not badly equipped for the battle of life; and although the school which the Landlord has established is plain and unostentatious in its forms

and modes of instruction, it at least, with tolerable success, teaches these. For the uses made of them by the pupils in after life, the pupils are themselves responsible.

ORBOST AND DUNVEGAN.

PUNCTUALLY at nine next morning there was a grating of wheels on the gravel, and Malcolm and his dog-cart were at the door. After a little delay I took my place on the vehicle and we drove off. Malcolm was a thick-set, good-humoured, red haired and whiskered little fellow, who could be silent for half a day if needed, but who could speak, and speak to the point, too, when required. When driving, and especially when the chestnut mare exhibited any diminution of speed, he kept up a running fire of ejaculations. "Go on," he would say, as he shook the reins, for the whip he mercifully spared, "what are you thinking about?" "Hoots! chit, chit, chit! I'm ashamed of you!" "Now then. Hoots!" and these reproaches seemed to touch the mare's heart, for at every ejaculation she made a dash forward as if the whip had touched her.

On the way from Grishornish to Dunvegan,

about a couple of miles from the latter place, a road branches off to the right and runs away downward through the heathery waste; and about forty yards onward you come to a bridge spanning a gully, and into this gully three streams leap and become one, and then the sole stream flows also to the right with shallow fall and brawling rapid, the companion of the descending road. The road up to the bridge is steep, but it is steeper beyond, and at the bridge Malcolm jumped down and walked alongside with the reins in his hands. In the slow progression your eye naturally follows the road and the stream; and beyond the flank of a hill sloping gradually down to the purple gloom of undulating moorland, you catch a glimpse of a bit of blue sea, some white broken cliffs that drop down into it; and, leaning on these cliffs, a great green sunny strath, with a white dot of a house upon it. The glimpse of sea, and white cliffs, and stretch of sunny greenness is pleasant; the hill, which you have yet to climb, keeps the sun from you, and all around are low heathery eminences. You stare at the far-off sunlit greenness, and having satisfied yourself therewith, begin to examine the ground

above and on either side of the bridge, and find it possessed of much pastoral richness and variety. The main portion is covered with heather, but near you there are clumps of ferns, and further back are soft banks and platforms of verdure on which kine might browse and ruminate, and which only require the gilding of sunshine to make them beautiful. "What bridge is this?" I asked of Malcolm, who was still trudging alongside with the reins in his hand. "The Fairy Bridge"—and then I was told that the fairy sits at sunset on the green knolls and platforms of pasture chirming and singing songs to the cows; and that when a traveller crosses the bridge, and toils up the hill, she is sure to accompany him. As this was our own course, I asked, "Is the fairy often seen now?" "Not often. It's the old people who know about her. The shepherds sometimes hear her singing when they are coming down the hill; and years ago, a pedlar was found lying across the road up there dead; and it was thought that the fairy had walked along with him. But, indeed, I never saw or heard her myself—only that is what the old people say." And so in a modern dog-cart you

are slowly passing through one of the haunted places in Skye!

I fancy Malcolm must have seen that this kind of talk interested me. "Did you ever hear, sir, about the Battle of the Spoiling of the Dikes down at Trompon Kirk, yonder?" and he pointed with his whip to the yellow-green strath which broke down in cliffs to the sea.

I answered that I never had, and Malcolm's narrative flowed on at once.

"You see, sir, there was a feud between the Macdonalds of the Mainland and the Macleods of Trotternish; and one Sunday, when the Macleods were in church, the Macdonalds came at full of tide, unknown to any one, and fastened their boats to the arched rocks on the shore—for it's a strange coast down there, full of caves and natural bridges and arches. Well, after they had fastened their boats, they surrounded the church, secured the door, and set it on fire. Every one was burned that Sunday except one woman, who squeezed herself through a window—it was so narrow that she left one of her breasts behind her—and escaped carrying the news. She raised the

country with her crying and the sight of her bloody clothes. The people—although it was Sunday—rose, men and women, and came down to the burning church, and there the battle began. The men of Macleod's country fought, and the women picked up the blunted arrows, sharpened them on the stones, and then gave them to the men. The Macdonalds were beaten at last, and made for their boats. But by this time it was ebb of tide; and what did they see but the boats in which they had come, and which they had fastened to the rocky arches, hanging in the air! Like an otter, when its retreat to the sea is cut off, the Macdonalds turned on the men of Macleod's country and fought till the last of them fell, and in the sheughs of the sand their blood was running down red into the sea. At that time the tide came further in than it does now, and the people had built a turf dike to keep it back from their crops. Then they took the bodies of the Macdonalds and laid them down side by side at the foot of the dike, and tumbled it over on the top of them. That was the way they were buried. And after they had tumbled the dike they were vexed, for they minded then that

the sea might come in and destroy their crops. That's the reason that the battle is called the Battle of the Spoiled Dikes."

"The men of Macleod's country would regret the spoiling of the dikes, as Bruce the battle-axe with which, on the evening before Bannockburn, and in the seeing of both armies, he cracked the skull of the English knight who came charging down upon him."

Undiverted by my remark, Malcolm went on, "Maybe, sir, you have seen the Sciur of Eig as you came past in the steamer?"

"Yes, and I know the story. The Macdonalds were cooped up in a cave, and the Macleods ranged over the island and could find no trace of them. They then in high dudgeon returned to their boats, meaning to depart next morning. There was a heavy fall of snow during the night, was there not? and just when the Macleods were about to sail, the figure of a man, who had come out to see if the invaders were gone, was discerned on the top of the Sciur, against the sky line. The Macleods returned, and by the foot-prints in the snow they tracked the man to his hiding-

place. They then heaped up heath and what timber they could procure, at the mouth of the cave, applied fire, and suffocated all who had therein taken shelter. Is that not it?"

"The Macdonalds first burned the church at Trompon down there. The bones of the Macdonalds are lying in the cave to this day, they say. I should like to see them."

"But don't you think it was a dreadful revenge? Eig was one of the safe places of the Macdonalds; and the people in the cave were chiefly old men, women, and children. Don't you think it was a very barbarous act, Malcolm?"

"I don't know," said Malcolm; "I am a Macleod myself."

By the time I had heard the story of Lady Grange, who sleeps in the Trompon churchyard, we had toiled pretty well up the steep ascent. On our way we heard no fairy singing to the kine, nor did any unearthly figure accompany us. Perhaps the witchery of the setting sun was needed. By the time we reached the top of the hill the pyramidical forms of Macleod's Tables were dis-

tinctly visible, and then Malcolm took his seat beside me in the dog-cart.

Macleod's Tables, two hills as high as Arthur's Seat, flat at the top as any dining-table in the country—from which peculiar conformation indeed they draw their names—and covered deep into spring by a table-cloth of snow; Macleod's Maidens, three spires of rock rising sheer out of the sea, shaped like women, around whose feet the foamy wreaths are continually forming, fleeting, and disappearing—what magic in the names of rocky spire and flat-topped hill to him who bears the name of Macleod, and who can call them his own! What is modern wealth—association-less, without poetry, melting like snow in the hot hand of a spendthrift—compared to that old inheritance of land, which is patent to the eye, which bears your name, around which legends gather,—all vital to you as your great-grandmother's blue eyes and fair hair; as your great-grandfather's hot temper and the corrugation of his forehead when he frowned! These bold landmarks of family possession must be regarded with pecu-

liar interest by the family. They make the white sheet on which you—a shadow of fifty years or thereby—are projected by the camera obscura of fate. The Tables and the Maidens remain for ever bearing your name, while you—the individual Macleod—are as transitory as the mist wreath of the morning which melts on the one, or the momentary shape of wind-blown foam which perishes on the base of the other. The value of these things is spiritual, and cannot be affected by the click of the auctioneer's hammer, or the running of the hour-glass sand on the lawyer's table after the title-deeds have been read and the bids are being made. Wealth is mighty, but it can no more buy these things than it can buy love, or reverence, or piety. Jones may buy the Tables and the Maidens, but they do not own him; he is for ever an alien: they wear the ancient name, they dream the ancient dream. When poverty has stripped your livery from all your servants, they remain faithful. When an Airlie is about to die, with tuck of drum, they say, a ghostly soldier marches round the castle. Rothschild, with all his millions, could not buy that drummer's services.

What is the use of buying an estate to-day? It is never wholly yours; the old owner holds part possession with you. It is like marrying a widow; you hold her heart, but you hold it in partnership with the dead. I should rather be the plainest English yeoman whose family has been in possession of a farm since the Heptarchy than be the richest banker in Europe. The majority of men are like Arabs, their tents are pitched here to-night and struck to-morrow. Those families only who have held lands for centuries can claim an abiding home. In such families there is a noble sense of continuity, of the unbroken onflowing of life. The pictures and the furniture speak of forefather and foremother. Your ancestor's name is on your books, and you see the pencil marks which he has placed against the passages that pleased him. The necklace your daughter wears heaved on the breast of the ancestress from whom she draws her smile and her eyes. The rookery that caws to-night in the sober sunset cawed in the ears of the representative of your house some half-dozen generations back —the very same in every respect, 'tis the individual rooks only that have changed. The full-

foliaged murmur of the woods shape your name, and yours only. As for these Macleods——

"That's Orbost, sir, the house under the hill," said Malcolm, pointing with his whip, and obviously tired of the prolonged silence, "and yonder on the left are the Cuchullins. The sea is down there, but you cannot see it from this. We'll be there in half an hour," and exactly in half an hour, with Macleod's Tables behind us, we passed the garden and the offices, and alighted on the daisied sward before the house.

After I had wandered about for an hour I made up my mind that, had I the choice, I should rather live at Orbost than at any other house in Skye. And yet, at Orbost, the house itself is the only thing that can reasonably be objected to. In the first place, it is one of those elegant expressionless houses in the Italian style with which one is familiar in the suburban districts of large cities, and as such it is quite out of keeping with the scenery and the spiritual atmosphere of the island. It is too modern, and villa like. It is as innocent of a legend as Pall Mall. It does not believe in ghost stories. It has a dandified and sceptical look;

and as it has not taken to the island, the island has not taken to it. Around it trees have not grown well; they are mere stunted trunks, bare, hoary, wind-writhen. There is not a lichen or discoloration on its smoothly-chiselled walls; not a single chimney or gable has been shrouded with affectionate ivy. It looks like a house which has "cut" the locality, and which the locality has "cut" in return. In the second place, the house is stupidly situated. It turns a cold shoulder on the grand broken coast; on the ten miles of sparkling sea on which the sun is showering millions of silver coins, ever a new shower as the last one disappears; on Rum, with a veil of haze on its highest peak; on the lyrical Cuchullins—for although of the rigidest granite, they always give one the idea of passion and tumult; on the wild headlands of Bracadale, fading one after another, dimmer and dimmer, into distance;—on all this the house turns a cold shoulder, and on a meadow on which some dozen colts are feeding, and on a low strip of moory hill beyond, from which the cotters draw their peats, it stares intently with all its doors and windows. Right about face. Attention! That

done, the most fastidious could object to nothing at Orbost, on the point of beauty at least. The faces of the Skye people, continually set like flints against assaults of wind and rain, are all lined and puckered about the eyes; and in Skye houses you naturally wish to see something of the same weather-beaten look. Orbost, with its smooth front and unwinking windows, outrages the fitness of things.

Of the interior no one can complain; for on entering you are at once surrounded by a proper antiquity and venerableness. The dining-room is large and somewhat insufficiently lighted, and on the walls hang two of Raeburn's half-lengths—the possession of which are in themselves vouchers of a family's respectability—and several portraits of ladies with obsolete waists and head-dresses, and military gentlemen in the uniform of last century. The furniture is dark and massy; the mahogany drawing depth and colour from age and usage; the carpet has been worn so bare that the pattern has become nearly obliterated. The room was not tidy, I was pleased to see. A small table placed near the window was covered with a litter of papers;

in one corner were guns and fishing-rods, and a fishing-basket laid near them on the floor; and the round dusty mirror above the mantelpiece—which had the curious faculty of reducing your size, so that in its depth you saw yourself as it were at a considerable distance—had spills of paper stuck between its gilded frame and the wall. From these spills of paper I concluded that the house was the abode of a bachelor who occasionally smoked after dinner—which, indeed, was the case, only the master of the house was from home at the time of my visit. In the drawing-room, across the lobby, hooped ladies of Queen Anne's time might have sat and drunk tea out of the tiniest china cups. The furniture was elegant, but it was the elegance of an ancient beau. The draperies were rich, but they had lost colour, like a spinster's cheek. In a corner stood a buffet with specimens of cracked china. Curious Indian ornaments, and a volume of Clarissa Harlowe, and another volume of the Poetical Works of Mr Alexander Pope—the binding faded, the paper dim—lay on the central table. Had the last reader left them there? They reminded me of the lute—it may be

seen at this day in Pompeii—which the dancing girl flung down in an idle moment. In a dusky corner a piano stood open, but the ivory keys had grown yellow, and all richness of voice had been knocked out of them by the fingerings of dead girls. I touched them, and heard the metallic complaint of ill-usage, of old age, of utter loneliness and neglect. I thought of Ossian, and the flight of the dark-brown years. It was the first time they had spoken for long. The room, too, seemed to be pervaded by a scent of withered rose leaves, but whether this odour lived in the sense or the imagination, it would be useless to inquire.

Orbost lies pleasantly to the sun, and in the garden I could almost fancy Malvolio walking cross-gartered—so trim it was, so sunnily sedate, so formal, so ancient-looking. The shadow on the dial told the age of the day, clipped box-wood ran along every walk. Trees, crucified to the warm brick walls, stretched out long arms on which fruit was ripening. The bee had stuck his head so deeply into a rose that he could hardly get it out again, and so with the leaves—as a millionaire with bank-notes—he impatiently buzzed and fidgeted. And then you

were not without sharp senses of contrast: out of the sunny warmth and floral odours you lifted your eyes, and there were Macleod's Tables rising in an atmosphere of fable; and up in the wind above you, turning now and again its head in alert outlook, skimmed a snow-white gull, weary—as tailors sometimes are with sitting—of dancing on the surges of the sea.

Orbost stands high above the sea, and if you wish thoroughly to enjoy yourself you must walk down the avenue to the stone seat placed on the road which winds along the brow of the broken cliffs, and which, by many a curve and bend, reaches the water level at about a quarter of a mile's distance, where there is a boat-house, and boats lying keel uppermost or sideways, and a stretch of yellow sand on which the tide is flowing, creamy line after creamy line. From where you sit the ground breaks down first in a wall of cliff, then in huge boulders as big as churches, thereafter in bushy broken ground with huts perched in the coziest places, each hut swathed in the loveliest films of blue smoke; and all through this broken ground there are narrow winding paths along which

a cow is always being gingerly driven, or a wild Indian-looking girl is bringing water from some cool spring beneath. Here you can quietly enjoy the expanse of dazzling sea, a single sail breaking the restless scintillations; far Rum asleep on the silver floor; and, caught at a curious angle, the Cuchullin hills—reminding you of some stranded iceberg, splintered, riven, many-ridged, which the sun in all his centuries has been unable to melt. In the present light they have a curiously hoary look, and you can notice that in the higher corries there are long streaks of snow. On the right, beyond the boat-house, a great hill, dappled with brown and olive like a seal's back, and traversed here and there by rocky terraces, breaks in precipices down to the sea line; and between it and the hill on which you are sitting, and which slopes upward behind, you see the beginning of a deep glen, in its softness and greenness suggesting images of pastoral peace, the bringing home of rich pails by milkmaids, the lowing of cattle in sober ruddy sunsets. "What glen is that, Malcolm?" "Oh, sir, it just belongs to the farm." "Is there a house in it?" "No, but there's the

ruins of a dozen." "How's that?" "Ye see, the old Macleods liked to keep their cousins and second cousins about them; and so Captain Macleod lived at the mouth of the glen, and Major Macleod at the top of it, and Colonel Macleod over the hill yonder. If the last trumpet had been blown at the end of the French war, no one but a Macleod would have risen out of the churchyard at Dunvegan. If you want to see a chief now-a-days, you must go to London for him. Ay, sir, Dun Kenneth's prophecy has come to pass—'In the days of Norman, son of the third Norman, there will be a noise in the doors of the people, and wailing in the house of the widow; and Macleod will not have so many gentlemen of his name as will row a five-oared boat around the Maidens!' The prophecy has come to pass, and the Tables are no longer Macleod's—at least one of them is not."

After wandering about Orbost we resumed our seats in the dog-cart, and drove to Dunvegan Castle.

As we drew near Dunvegan we came down on one of those sinuous sea-lochs which—hardly

broader than a river—flow far inland, and carry mysteriousness of sight and sound, the gliding sail, the sea-bird beating high against the wind, to the door of the shepherd, who is half a sailor among his bleating flocks. Across the sea, and almost within hail of your voice, a farm and outhouses looked embattled against the sky. Along the shore, as we drove, were boats and nets, and here and there little clumps and knots of houses. People were moving about on the roads intent on business. We passed a church, a merchant's store, a post-office; we were plainly approaching some village of importance; and on the right hand the chestnuts, larches, and ashes which filled every hollow, and covered every rolling slope, gave sufficient indication that we were approaching the castle.

In the centre of these woods we turned up a narrow road to the right along which ran a wall, and stopped at a narrow postern door. Here Malcolm rang a bell—the modern convenience grating somewhat on my preconceived notions of an approach to the old keep; if he had blown a

horn I daresay I should have felt better satisfied —and in due time we were admitted by a trim damsel. The bell was bad, but the brilliant garden into which we stepped was worse—soft level lawns, a huge star of geraniums, surrounded at proper distances by half-moons and crescents of calceolarias rimmed with lobelias. The garden was circled by a large wall, against which fruit-trees were trained. In thinking of Dunvegan my mind had unconsciously become filled with desolate and Ossianic images, piled and hoary rocks, the thistle waving its beard in the wind, flakes of sea spray flying over all—and behold I rang a bell as if I were in Regent Street, and by a neat damsel was admitted into a garden that would have done no discredit to Kensington! After passing through the garden we entered upon a space of wild woodland, containing some fine timber, and romance began to revive. Malcolm then led me to an outhouse, and pointed out a carved stone above the doorway, on which were quartered the arms of the Macleods and Macdonalds. "Look there," said he, "Macleod has built the stone into his barn which

should have been above his fire-place in his dining-room."

"I see the bull's head of Macleod and the galley of Macdonald—were the families in any way connected?"

"Oftener by a bloody dirk than by a gold marriage ring. But with all their quarrellings they intermarried more than once. Dunvegan was originally a stronghold of the Macdonald."

"Indeed! and how did the Macleods get possession?"

"I'll tell you that," said Malcolm. "Macdonald of Dunvegan had no son, but his only daughter was married to Macleod of Harris, and a young chief was growing up in Macleod's castle. The Macdonalds, knowing that when the old man was dead, they would have no one to lead them to battle, were pondering whom they should elect as chief; and, at the same time, Macleod's lady was just as anxiously pondering by what means her son should sit in Dunvegan. Well, while all this thinking and scheming was going on secretly in Skye and Harris, Macdonald, wishing to visit Macleod, ordered his barge and rowers to be in readiness,

and pushed off. Macleod, hearing that his father-in-law was coming, went out in his barge to meet him half-way, and to escort him to his castle with all honour. Macleod's barge was bigger and stronger than Macdonald's, and held a greater number of rowers; and while his men were pulling, the chief sat in the stern steering, and his wife sat by his side. When they got into mid-channel a heavy mist came down, but still the men pulled, and still Macleod steered. All at once Macleod found that he was running straight on his father-in-law's barge, and just when he had his hand on the helm to change the course and avoid striking, his wife gripped him hard and whispered in his ear, 'Macleod, Macleod, there's only that barge betwixt you and Dunvegan.' Macleod took the hint, steered straight on, struck and sunk Macdonald's barge in the mist, and sailed for Dunvegan, which he claimed in the name of his son. That is the way, as the old people tell, that Macleod came into possession here."

Then we strolled along the undulating paths, and at a sudden turn there was the ancient keep on its rock, a stream brawling down close at hand,

the tide far withdrawn, the long shore heaped with dulse and tangle, and the sea-mews above the flag-staff, as the jackdaws fly above the cathedral towers in England. It was gray as the rock on which it stood—there were dark tapestries of ivy on the walls, but at a first glance it was disappointingly modern-looking. I thought of the mighty shell of Tantallon looking towards the Bass, and waving a matted beard of lichens in the sea wind, and began to draw disadvantageous comparisons. The feeling was foolishness, and on a better acquaintance with the building it wore off. Dunvegan is inhabited, and you cannot have well-aired sheets, a well-cooked dinner, and the venerableness of ruin. Comfort and decay are never companions.

Dunvegan reminds one of a fragment of an old ballad, encumbered with a modern editor's introductory chapter, historical disquisitions, critical comments, explanatory and illustrative notes, and glossarial index. The dozen or so of rude stanzas —a whole remote passionate world dwelling in them as in some wizard's mirror—is by far the most valuable portion of the volume, although, in

point of bulk, it bears no proportion to the subsidiary matter which has grown around it. Dunvegan is perhaps the oldest inhabited building in the country, but the ancient part is of small extent. One portion of it, it is said, was built in the ninth century. A tower was added in the fifteenth, another portion in the sixteenth, and the remainder by different hands, and at irregular intervals since then. No inconsiderable portion is unquestionably modern. The old part of the castle looks toward the sea, and entrance is obtained by a steep and narrow archway—up which, perhaps, came Macleod of Harris after he sunk the barge of his father-in-law in the misty Minch. In a crevice in the wall, which forms one side of this entrance, a well was recently discovered; it had been built up—no man knows for how long—and when tasted, the water was found perfectly sweet and pure. In the old days of strife and broil it may have cooled many a throat thirsty with siege. The most modern portion of the building, I should fancy, is the present frontage, which, as you approach it by the bridge which solidly fills up the ravine, is not without a certain grandeur and no-

bility of aspect. The rock on which the castle stands is surrounded on three sides by the sea; and fine as the old pile looked at ebb of tide, one could fancy how much its appearance would be improved with all that far-stretching ugliness of sand and tangle obliterated, and the rock swathed with the azure and silence of ocean. To sleep in a bed-room at Dunvegan in such circumstances, must be like sleeping in a bed-room in fairy-land. You might hear a mermaid singing beneath your window, and looking out into the moonlight, behold, rising from the glistening swells, the perilous beauty of her breasts and hair.

After viewing the castle from various points, we boldly advanced across the bridge and rang the bell. After waiting some little time, we were admitted by a man who—the family at the time being from home—seemed the only person in possession. He was extremely polite, volunteered to show us all over the place, and regretted that in the prolonged absence of his master the carpets and furniture in the "drawring-room" had been lifted. The familiar English *patois* sounded strange

in the castle of a Macleod! On his invitation we entered an unfurnished hall with galleries running to left and right, and on the wooden balustrades of one of these galleries the great banner of Macleod was dispread—a huge white sheet on which the arms and legend of the house were worked in crimson. Going up stairs, we passed through spacious suites of rooms, carpetless, and with the furniture piled up in the centre and covered with an awning—through every window obtaining a glimpse of blue Loch and wild Skye headland. In most cases in the rooms the family pictures were left hanging, some fine, others sorry daubs enough, yet all interesting as suggesting the unbroken flow of generations. Here was Rory More, who was knighted in the reign of James VI. Here was the Macdonald lady, whose marriage with the Macleod of that day was the occasion of the arms of the families being united on the sculptured stone which we saw built above the door of the barn outside. Here was a haughty-looking young man of twenty-five, and yonder the same man at sixty, grim, wrinkled, suspicious-looking—resembling the earlier portrait only in the pride of

eye and lip. Here were Macleod beauties who married and became mothers in other houses; yonder were beauties from other castles who became mothers here, and grew gray-haired and died, leaving a reminiscence of their features in the family for a generation or two. Here was the wicked Macleod, yonder the spendthrift in whose hands the family wealth melted, and over there the brave soldier standing with outstretched arm, elephants and Indian temples forming an appropriate background. The rooms were spacious, every window affording a glorious sea view; but from their unfurnished and dismantled condition there arose a sort of Ossianic desolation, which comfortless as it must have been to a permanent dweller, did not fail to yield a certain gloomy pleasure to the imagination of the visitor of an hour.

Passing up and down stairs in the more ancient portion of the castle, the man in possession showed us the dungeons in which the Macleods immured their prisoners. I had fancied that these would have been scooped out of the rock on which the castle stood. Whether such existed I cannot say;

but by candle-light I peered into more than one stony closet let into the mighty wall—the entrance of which the garments of the lady must have swept every night as she went to bed—where the captured foemen of the family were confined. Perhaps the near contiguity of the prisoner, perhaps the sweeping of garments past the dungeon door, perhaps the chance-heard groan or clank of manacle, constituted the exquisite zest and flavour of revenge. Men keep their dearest treasures near them; and it might be that the neighbourhood of the wretch he hated—so near that the sound of revel could reach him at times—was more grateful to Macleod than his burial in some far-away vault, perhaps to be forgotten. Who knows! It is difficult to creep into the hearts of those old sea-kings. If I mistake not, one of the dungeons is at present used as a wine cellar. So the world and the fashion of it changes! Where the Macleod of three centuries ago kept his prisoner, the Macleod of to-day keeps his claret. From which of its uses the greatest amount of satisfaction has been derived would be a curious speculation.

By a narrow spiral stair we reached the most interesting apartment in Dunvegan—the Fairy Room, in which Sir Walter Scott slept once. This apartment is situated in the ancient portion of the building, it overlooks the sea, and its walls are of enormous thickness. From its condition I should almost fancy that no one has slept there since Sir Walter's time. In it, at the period of my visit, there was neither bedstead nor chair, and it seemed a general lumber room. The walls were hung with rusty broadswords, dirks, targes, pistols, Indian helmets; and tunics of knitted steel were suspended on frames, but so rotten with age and neglect that a touch frayed them as if they had been woven of worsted. There were also curved scimitars, and curiously-hafted daggers, and two tattered regimental flags—that no doubt plunged through battle smoke in the front of charging lines —and these last I fancied had been brought home by the soldier whose portrait I had seen in one of the modern rooms. Moth-eaten volumes were scattered about amid a chaos of rusty weapons, cruses, and lamps. In one corner lay a huge oaken chest with a chain wound round it, but the

lid was barely closed, and through the narrow aperture a roll of paper protruded docketed in clerkly hand and with faded ink—accounts of —— from 1715 till some time at the close of the century—in which doubtless some curious items were imbedded. On everything lay the dust and neglect of years. The room itself was steeped in a half twilight. The merriest sunbeam became grave as it slanted across the corroded weapons in which there was no answering gleam. Cobwebs floated from the corners of the walls—the spiders which wove them having died long ago of sheer age. To my feeling it would be almost impossible to laugh in the haunted chamber, and if you did so you would be startled by a strange echo as if something mocked you. There was a grave-like odour in the apartment. You breathed dust and decay.

Seated on the wooden trunk round which the chain was wound, while Malcolm with his hand thrust in the hilt of a broadsword, was examining the notches on its blade, I inquired,

"Is there not a magic flag kept at Dunvegan? The flag was the gift of a fairy, if I remember the story rightly."

"Yes," said Malcolm, making a cut at an imaginary foeman, and then hanging the weapon up on the wall; "but it is kept in a glass case, and never shown to strangers, at least when the family is from home."

"How did Macleod come into possession of the flag, Malcolm?"

"Well, the old people say that one of the Macleods fell in love with a fairy, and used to meet her on the green hill out there. Macleod promised to marry her; and one night the fairy gave him a green flag, telling him that, when either he or one of his race was in distress, the flag was to be waved, and relief would be certain. Three times the flag might be waved; but after the third time it might be thrown into the fire, for the power would have gone all out of it. I don't know, indeed, how it was, but Macleod deserted the fairy and married a woman."

"Is there anything astonishing in that? Would you not rather marry a woman than a fairy yourself."

"Maybe, if she was a rich one like the woman Macleod married," said Malcolm with a grin.

"But when the fairy heard of the marriage she was in a great rage whatever. She cast a spell over Macleod's country, and all the women brought forth dead sons, and all the cows brought forth dead calves. Macleod was in great tribulation. He would soon have no young men to fight his battles, and his tenants would soon have no milk or cheese wherewith to pay their rents. The cry of his people came to him as he sat in his castle, and he waved the flag, and next day over the country there were living sons and living calves. Another time, in the front of a battle, he was sorely pressed, and nigh being beaten, but he waved the flag again, and got the victory, and a great slaying of his enemies."

"Then the flag has not been waved for the third and last time?"

"No. At the time of the potato failure, when the people were starving in their cabins, it was thought that he should have waved it and stopped the rot. But the flag stayed in its case. Macleod can only wave it once now; and I'm sure he's like a man with his last guinea in his pocket—he does not like to spend it. But maybe, sir, you

would like to climb up to the flag-staff and see the view."

We then left the haunted chamber, passed through the dismantled room in which the portraits hung, and ascended the narrow spiral stair—the walls of which, whether from sea damp, or from a peculiarity of the lime used in building, were covered with a glistering scurf of salt—and finally emerged on the battlemented plateau from which the flag-staff sprang. The huge mast had fallen a month or two previously, and was now spliced with rope and propped with billets of wood. A couple of days before the catastrophe, a young fellow from Cambridge, Malcolm told me, had climbed to the top—lucky for the young fellow it did not fall then, else he and Cambridge had parted company for ever. From our airy perch the outlook was wonderfully magnificent. From the breast of the hill which shut out everything in one direction, there rolled down on the castle billow on billow of many-coloured foliage. The garden through which we had passed an hour before was but a speck of bright colour. The little toy village sent up its pillars of smoke. There was the brown stony

beach, the boats, the ranges of nets, the sinuous snake-like Loch, and the dark far-stretching promontories asleep on the sleekness of summer sea. With what loveliness of shining blue the sea flowed in everywhere, carrying silence and the foreign-looking bird into inland solitudes, girdling with its glory the rock on which the chief's castle had stood for ten centuries, and at the door of the shepherd's shealing calling on the brown children with the voices of many wavelets, to come down and play with them on crescents of yellow sand!

Driving homeward I inquired, "Does the Laird live here much?" "No, indeed," said Malcolm; "he lives mainly in London."

And thereupon I thought how pleasant it must be for a man to escape from the hollow gusty castle with its fairy flag which has yet to be waved once, its dungeons, its haunted chambers, its large gaunt rooms, with portraits of men and women from whom he has drawn his blood, its traditions of revenge and crime—and take up his abode in some villa at breezy Hampstead, or classic Twickenham, or even in some half-suburban residence in the neighbourhood of Regent's Park. The

villa at Hampstead or Twickenham is neat and trim, and when you enter on residence, you enter without previous associations. It is probably not so old as yourself. The walls and rooms are strange, but you know that you and they will become pleasantly acquainted by and by. Dark family faces do not lower upon you out of the past; the air of the room in which you sit is not tainted with the smell of blood spilt hundreds of years ago. You and your dwelling are not the sole custodiers of dreadful secrets. The shadows of the fire-light on the twilight walls do not take shapes that daunt and affright. Your ancestors no longer tyrannise over you. You escape from the gloomy past, and live in the light and the voices of to-day. You are yourself—you are no longer a link in a blood-crusted chain. You enter upon the enjoyment of your individuality, as you enter upon the enjoyment of a newly-inherited estate. In modern London you drink nepenthe, and Dunvegan is forgotten. Were I the possessor of a haunted, worm-eaten castle, around which strange stories float, I should fly from it as I would from a guilty conscience, and in the whirl of vivid life lose

all thoughts of my ancestors. I should appeal to the present to protect me from the past. I should go into Parliament and study blue-books, and busy myself with the better regulation of alkali works, and the drainage of Stoke Pogis. No ancestor could touch me *then*.

"It's a strange old place, Dunvegan," said Malcolm, as we drove down by the Fairy Bridge, "and many strange things have happened in it. Did you ever hear, sir, how Macdonald of Sleat—Donald Gorm, or Blue Donald, as he was called—stayed a night with Macleod of Dunvegan at a time when there was feud between them?"

"No: but I shall be glad to hear the story now."

"Well," Malcolm went on, "on a stormy winter evening, when the walls of Dunvegan were wet with the rain of the cloud and the spray of the sea, Macleod, before he sat down to dinner, went out to have a look at the weather. 'A giant's night is coming on, my men,' he said when he came in, 'and if Macdonald of Sleat were at the foot of my rock seeking a night's shelter, I don't think I could refuse it.' He then sat down in the

torch-light at the top of the long table, with his gentlemen around him. When they were half through with their meal a man came in with the news that the barge of Macdonald of Sleat—which had been driven back by stress of weather on its way to Harris—was at the foot of the rock, and that Macdonald asked shelter for the night for himself and his men. 'They are welcome,' said Macleod; 'tell them to come in.' The man went away, and in a short time Macdonald, his piper, and his body guard of twelve, came in wet with the spray and rain, and weary with rowing. Now on the table there was a boar's head—which is always an omen of evil to a Macdonald—and noticing the dish, Donald Gorm with his men about him sat at the foot of the long table, beneath the salt, and away from Macleod and the gentlemen. Seeing this, Macleod made a place beside himself, and called out, 'Macdonald of Sleat, come and sit up here!' 'Thank you,' said Donald Gorm, 'I 'll remain where I am; but remember that wherever Macdonald of Sleat sits that 's the head of the table.' So when dinner was over the gentlemen began to talk about their exploits in hunting, and their

deeds in battle, and to show each other their dirks. Macleod showed his, which was very handsome, and it was passed down the long table from gentleman to gentleman, each one admiring it and handing it to the next, till at last it came to Macdonald, who passed it on, saying nothing. Macleod noticed this, and called out, 'Why don't you show your dirk, Donald; I hear it's very fine?' Macdonald then drew his dirk, and holding it up in his right hand, called out, 'Here it is, Macleod of Dunvegan, and in the best hand for pushing it home in the four and twenty islands of the Hebrides.' Now Macleod was a strong man, but Macdonald was a stronger, and so Macleod could not call him a liar; but thinking he would be mentioned next, he said, 'And where is the next best hand for pushing a dirk home in the four and twenty islands?' '*Here*,' cried Donald Gorm, holding up his dirk in his left hand, and brandishing it in Macleod's face, who sat amongst his gentlemen biting his lips with vexation. So when it came to bed-time, Macleod told Macdonald that he had prepared a chamber for him near his own, and that he had placed fresh heather in a barn for the piper and the body

guard of twelve. Macdonald thanked Macleod, but remembering the boar's head on the table, said he would go with his men, and that he preferred for his couch the fresh heather to the down of the swan. 'Please yourself, Macdonald of Sleat,' said Macleod, as he turned on his heel.

"Now it so happened that one of the body guard of twelve had a sweetheart in the castle, but he had no opportunity of speaking to her. But once when she was passing the table with a dish she put her mouth to the man's ear and whispered, 'Bid your master beware of Macleod. The barn you sleep in will be red flame at midnight and ashes before the morning.' The words of the sweetheart passed the man's ear like a little breeze, but he kept the colour of his face, and looked as if he had heard nothing. So when Macdonald and his men got into the barn where the fresh heather had been spread for them to sleep on, he told the words which had been whispered in his ear. Donald Gorm then saw the trick that was being played, and led his men quietly out by the back door of the barn, down to a hollow rock which stood up against the wind, and there they sheltered

themselves. By midnight the sea was red with the reflection of the burning barn, and morning broke on gray ashes and smouldering embers. The Macleods thought they had killed their enemies; but fancy their astonishment when Donald Gorm with his body guard of twelve marched past the castle down to the foot of the rock, where his barge was moored, with his piper playing in front—'Macleod, Macleod, Macleod of Dunvegan, I drove my dirk into your father's heart, and in payment of last night's hospitality I'll drive it to the hilt in his son's yet.'"

"Macleod of Dunvegan must have been a great rascal," said I; "and I hope he got his deserts."

"I don't know, indeed," said Malcolm; "but if Donald Gorm caught him he could hardly miss." He then added, as if in deprecation of the idea that any portion of ignominy was attachable to him, "I am not one of the Dunvegan Macleods; I come from the Macleods of Raasay."

DUNTULM.

THE Landlord's house had been enveloped for several days in misty rain. It did not pour straight down, it did not patter on door and window, it had no action as it has in the south, —which made it all the more tormenting, for in action there is always some sort of exhilaration; in any case you have the notion that it will wear itself out soon, that "it is too hot work to last long, Hardy." An immense quantity of moisture was held in the atmosphere, and it descended in a soft, silent, imperceptible drizzle. It did not seem so very bad when you looked out on it from the window, but if you ventured on the gravel you were wet to the skin in a trice. White damp vapours lay low on the hills across the Loch; white damp vapours lay on the rising grounds where the sheep fed; white damp vapours hid the tops of the larches which sheltered the house from the south-west winds. Heaven was a wet blanket,

and everything felt its influence. During the whole day Maida lay dreaming on the rug before the fire. The melancholy parrot moped in its cage, and at intervals—for the sake of variety merely—attacked the lump of white sugar between the wires, or suspended itself, head downwards, and eyed you askance. The horses stamped and pawed in their stables. The drenched peacock, which but a few days before was never weary displaying his starry tail, read one a lesson on the instability of human glory. The desolate sea lapping the weedy piers of Tyre; Napoleon at St Helena, his innumerable armies, the thunders of his cannon that made capitals pale, faded away, perished utterly like a last year's dream, could not have been more impressive. It sat on the garden seat, a mere lump of draggled feathers, and as gray as a hedge-sparrow. The Landlord shut himself up in his own room, writing letters against the departure of the Indian mail. We read novels, and yawned, and made each other miserable with attempts at conversation—and still the clouds hung low on hill, and rising ground, and large plantation, like surcharged sponges; and still the drizzle came

down mercilessly, noiselessly, until the world was sodden, and was rapidly becoming sponge-like too.

On the fourth day we went upstairs, threw ourselves on our beds dead beat, and fell asleep, till we were roused by the gong for dinner. Thrusting my face hurriedly into a basin of cold water, tidying dishevelled locks, I got down when the soup was being taken away, and was a good deal laughed at. Somehow the spirits of the party seemed lighter; the despotism of rain did not weigh so heavily on them; I felt almost sportively inclined myself; and just at the conclusion of dessert, when wine had circulated once or twice, there was a flush of rosy light on the panes. I went at once to the window, and there was the sun raying out great lances of splendour, and armies of fiery mists lifting from the hills and streaming upwards, glorious as seraph bands, or the transfigured spirits of martyrdom. The westward-ebbing loch was sleek gold, the wet trees twinkled, every puddle was sun-gilt. I looked at the barometer and saw the mercury rising like hope in a man's breast when fortune smiles on him. The curtains were drawn back to let the red light fully

into the room. "I like to see that fiery smoke on the hills," said the Landlord, "it's always a sign of fine weather setting in. Now it won't do for you fellows to lie up here like beached boats doing nothing. You must be off after tiffin to-morrow. I'll give you letters of introduction, a dog-cart and a man, and in a week or so come back and tell me what you think of Duntulm and Quirang. You must rough it you know. You mustn't be afraid of a shower, or of getting your feet wetted in a bog."

And so next day after tiffin the Landlord sent us off into the wilds, as a falconer might toss his hawk into the air.

The day was fine, the heat was tempered by a pleasant breeze, great white clouds swam in the blue void, and every now and again a shower came racing across our path with a sunbeam at its heel. We drove past the village, past the huts that ran along the top of the cultivated hill-side, dropped down on Skeabost, and the stream with the island of graves, and in due time reached the solitary school-house at the junction of the roads. Turning to the left here, we drove along the east

shore of Loch Snizort, up stages of easy ascent, and then, some four or five miles on, left the Parliamentary Road and descended on Kingsburgh. I pointed out to Fellowes the ruins of the old house, spoke to him of the Prince, Flora Macdonald, Dr Johnson, and Boswell. After sauntering about there for a quarter of an hour, we walked down to the present house with its gables draped with ivies, and its pleasant doors and windows scented with roses and honey-suckles. To the gentleman who then occupied the farm we bore a letter from the Landlord, but, on inquiring, found that he had gone south on business a couple of days previously. This gentleman was a bachelor, the house was tenanted by servants only, and of course at Kingsburgh we could not remain. This was a disappointment; and as we walked back to the dog-cart, I told my companion of a pleasant ten days I had wasted there three or four summers since. I spoke to him of the Kingsburgh of that time—the kindly generous Christian Highland gentleman; of his open door and frank greeting, warm and hospitable; of his Christianity, as open and hospitable as his door; of the plenteous meats

and drinks, and the household pieties which ever seemed to ask a blessing. I spoke of the pleasant family, so numerous, so varied; the grandmother, made prisoner to an easy-chair, yet never fretful, never morose; who, on the lip of ninety, wore the smile of twenty-five; who could look up from her Bible—with which she was familiar as with the way to her bedroom—to listen to the news of the moment, and to feel interested in it; who, with the light of the golden city in her eyes, could listen and enter into a girl's trouble about her white frock and her first dance. There is nothing *keeps* so well as a good heart; nothing which time sweetens so to the core. I spoke of Kingsburgh himself, guileless, chivalrous, hospitable; of his sisters, one a widow, one a spinster; of his brave soldier nephew from India; of his pretty nieces, with their English voices and their English wild-rose bloom—who loved the heather and the mist, and the blue Loch with the gulls sweeping over it, but *him* most of all; of his sons, deep in the Gorilla Book, and to whose stories, and the history of whose adventures and exploits grandmamma's ears were ever open. I spoke too of the guests that

came and went during my stay—the soldier, the artist, the mysterious man, who, so far as any of us knew, had neither name, occupation, nor country, who was without parents and antecedents—who was himself alone; of the games of croquet on the sunny lawn, of the pic-nics and excursions, of the books read in the cool twilight of the moss-house, of the smoking parliament held in the stables on rainy days, of the quiet cigar in the open air before going to bed. 'Twas the pleasantest fortnight I ever remember to have spent; and before I had finished telling my companion all about it we had taken our seats in the dog-cart, and were pretty well advanced on the way to Uig.

Uig is distant from Kingsburgh about five miles; the road is high above the sea, and as you drive along you behold the northern headlands of Skye, the wide blue Minch, and Harris, rising like a cloud on the horizon; and if the day is fine, you will enjoy the commerce of sea and sky, the innumerable tints thrown by the clouds on the watery mirror, the mat of glittering light spread beneath the sun, the gray lines of showers on the distant promontories, the tracks of air

currents on the mobile element between. The clouds pass from shape to shape—what resembles a dragon one moment resembles something else the next; the promontory which was obscure ten minutes ago is now yellow-green in sunlight; the watery pavement is tesselated with hues, but with hues that continually shift and change. In the vast outlook there is utter silence, but no rest. What with swimming vapour, passing Proteus-like from form to form—obscure showers that run—vagrant impulses of wind — sunbeams that gild and die in gilding—the vast impressionable mimetic floor outspread,—the sight you behold when you toil up the steep road from Kingsburgh to Uig is full of motion. There is no rest in nature, they say; and the clouds are changing like opinions and kingdoms, and the bodies and souls of men. Matter is a stream that flows, a fire that burns. By a cunninger chemistry than ours, the atoms that composed the body of Adam could be arrested somewhere yet.

Just when you have reached the highest part of the road you come in view of the Bay of Uig. You are high above it as you drive or walk along, the

ground is equally high on the other side, and about the distance of a mile inland, on a great sandy beach, the tide is rolling in long white lines that chase each other. On the deep water outside the tidal lines a yacht is rocking; there is a mansion-house with a flag-staff on the shore, and at the top of the bay are several houses, a church, and a school-house, built of comfortable stone and lime. When the Minch is angry outside, washing the headlands with spray, Uig is the refuge which the fisherman and the coaster seek. When once they have entered its rocky portals they are safe. The road now descends towards the shore; there is an inn midway, low-roofed, dimly-lighted, covered with thatch—on the whole perhaps the most unpromising edifice in the neighbourhood. Here we pulled up. Already we had driven some twenty-five miles, and as we wished to push on to Duntulm that evening, we were anxious to procure a fresh horse. The keen air had whetted our appetites, and we were eager for dinner, or what substitute for dinner could be provided. Our driver unharnessed the horse, and we entered a little room, spotlessly clean, however, and knocked with

our knuckles on the deal table. When the red-haired handmaiden entered, we discovered that the Uig bill of fare consisted of bread and butter, cheese, whisky, milk, and hard-boiled eggs—and a very satisfactory bill of fare we considered it too. There is no such condiment as hunger honourably earned by exercise in the open air. When the viands were placed before us we attacked them manfully. The bread and butter disappeared, the hard-boiled eggs disappeared, we flinched not before the slices of goats'-milk cheese; then we made equal division of the whisky, poured it into bowls of milk, and drank with relish. While in the middle of the feast the landlord entered—he wore the kilt, the only person almost whom I had seen wearing it in my sojourn in the island—to make arrangements relative to the fresh horse. He admitted that he possessed an animal, but as he possessed a gig and eke a driver, it was his opinion that the three should go together. To this we objected, stating that as we already had a vehicle and a driver, and as they were in no wise tired, such a change as he suggested would be needless. We told him also that we meant to remain at

Duntulm for one night only, and that by noon of the following day we would be back at his hostelry with his horse. The landlord seemed somewhat moved by our representations, and just when victory was hanging in the balance the brilliant idea struck my companion that he should be bribed with his own whisky. At the rap on the deal table the red-haired wench appeared, the order was given, and in a trice a jorum of mountain dew was produced. This decided matters, the landlord laid down the arms of argument, and after we had solemnly drunk each other's health he went out for the fresh horse, and in a quarter of an hour we were all right, and slowly descending the steep hill-road to Uig.

We drove through the village, where a good deal of building seemed going on, and then began to climb the hill-road that rose beyond it. Along the hill-side this road zig-zagged in such a curious manner, ran in such terraces and parallel lines, that the dog-cart immediately beneath you, and into which you could almost chuck a biscuit—the one machine heading east the other west—would take ten minutes before it reached the point to which

you had obtained. At last we reached the top of the wavy ascent, passed through a mile or two of moory wilderness, in which we met a long string of women bringing home creels of peats, and then in the early sunset descended the long hill-side which led to Kilmuir. Driving along we had Mugstot pointed out to us—a plain white dwelling on our left in which Macdonald lived after he had vacated Duntulm, and while Armadale was yet building. About this place, too, the Parliamentary Road stopped. No longer could we drive along smoothly as on an English turnpike. The pathway now was narrow and stony, and the dog-cart bumped and jolted in a most distressing manner. During the last hour, too, the scenery had changed its character. We were no longer descending a hill-side on which the afternoon sun shone pleasantly. Our path still lay along the sea, but above us were high cliffs with great boulders lying at their feet; beneath us, and sloping down to the sea level, boulders lay piled on each other, and against these the making tide seethed and fretted. The sun was setting on the Minch, and the irregular purple outline of Harris was distinctly visible on the horizon.

For some time back we had seen no house, nor had our path been crossed by a single human being. The solitariness and desolation of the scenery affected one. Everything around was unfamiliar and portentous. The road on which we drove was like a road in the "Faery Queen," along which a knight, the sunset dancing on his armour, might prick in search of perilous adventure. The chin of the sun now rested on the Minch, the overhanging cliffs were rosy, and the rocky road began to seem interminable. At last there was a sudden turn, and there, on a little promontory, with shattered wall and loophole against the red light, stood Duntulm —the castle of all others that I most wished to see.

Going down the rocky road, the uncomfortable idea crept into our minds that Duntulm, to whom we bore a letter of introduction from the Landlord, might—like the owner of Kingsburgh —have gone to the south on business. We could hardly have returned to Uig that night, and this thought made yet more rigid the wall of rosy cliff above us, and yet more dreary the seethe of the Minch amongst the broken boulders beneath. As suspense was worse than certainty, we urged on

the Uig horse, and in a short time, with the broken castle behind us, drew up at the house. Duntulm had seen us coming, and when we alighted he was at the door, his face hospitable as a fire in winter time, and his outstretched hand the best evidence of good wishes. In a moment the bald red cliffs and the homeless seething of the Minch among the broken stones faded out of my memory. We mentioned our names, and proffered the letter of introduction. "There is no need," said he, as he thrust the epistle into his pocket, "civility before ceremony. Having come you are of course my guests. Come in. The letter will tell me who you are soon enough." And so we were carried into the little parlour till our bedrooms were got ready, and then we went up-stairs, washed our hands and faces, changed our clothes, and came down for tea. When we entered the parlour, the tea-urn was hissing on the table, and with our host sat a photographer—bearded as all artists at the present day are—who had been engaged during the afternoon on Flora Macdonald's grave.

When tea was over we were carried into another room where were materials placed for the brew-

ing of punch. Through the window I beheld spectral castle, the sea on which the light was dying, the purple fringe of Harris on the horizon. And seated there, in the remotest corner of Skye, amongst people whom I had never before seen, girt by walls of cliffs and the sounding sea, in a region, too, in which there was no proper night, I confess to have been conscious of a pleasant feeling of strangeness, of removal from all customary conditions of thought and locality, which I like at times to recall and enjoy over again. Into this feeling the strange country through which I had that day driven, the strange room in which I sat, the strange faces surrounding me, the strange talk, all entered; yet I am almost certain that it was heightened to no inconsiderable extent by the peculiar spirit bottle on the table. This bottle was pale green in colour, was composed of two hollow hemispheres like a sand-glass, the mouthpiece surmounting the upper hemisphere of course; and from the upper hemisphere to the lower sprang four hollow arms, through which the liquor coursed, giving the bottle a curiously square appearance. I had never seen such a bottle before, and I suppose

till I go back to Duntulm I am not likely to see its like. Its shape was peculiar, and that peculiarity dove-tailed into the peculiarity of everything else. We sat there till the light had died out on the sea, and the cloud had come down on Harris, and then the candles were brought in.

But the broken tower of Duntulm still abode in my memory, and I began to make inquiries concerning it. I was told that it was long the seat of the Macdonalds, but that after the family had been driven out of it by the ghost of Donald Gorm, they removed to Mugstot. "Donald Gorm!" I said; "were they driven out by the restless spirit of the Donald who flouted Macleod at his own table at Dunvegan—who, when he was asked to show his dirk, held it up in the torch-light in the face of Macleod and of his gentlemen, with the exclamation, 'Here it is, Macleod of Dunvegan, and in the best hand for pushing it home in the four and twenty islands of the Hebrides?'" "They were driven away by the spirit of the same Donald," said our host. "That chieftain had been stricken by a lingering yet mortal illness, and removed to Edinburgh, and placed himself under the care of

the leeches there. His body lay on a sick-bed in Edinburgh, but his spirit roamed about the passages and galleries of the castle. The people heard the noises, and the slamming of doors, and the waving of tartans on the staircases, and did not know that it was the spirit of their sick master that troubled them. It was found out, however. The servants were frightened out of their wits by the unearthly voices, and the sounds of weeping, the waving of shadowy tartans, and the wringing of shadowy hands, and declared that they would no longer abide in the castle. At last a young man, from Kilmuir over there, said that if they would provide him with a sword and a Bible, and plenty to eat and drink, he would sit up in the hall all night and speak to the apparition. His offer was accepted, and he sat down to supper in the great hall with his sword drawn and his Bible open on the table before him. At midnight he heard doors open and close, and the sound of footsteps on the stairs, and before he knew where he was there was Donald Gorm, dressed in tartan as if for feast or battle, standing on the floor and looking at him. 'What do you want with me, Donald?'

said the young man. 'I was in Edinburgh last night,' said the spirit, 'and I am in my own castle to-night. Don't be afraid, man; there is more force in the little pebble which you chuck away from you with your finger and thumb than there is in my entire body of strength. Tell Donald Gorm Og—("Donald's son, you know," interpolated the photographer)—tell Donald Gorm Og to stand up for the right against might, to be generous to the multitude, to have a charitable hand stretched out to the poor. Woe's me! woe's me! I have spoken to a mortal, and must leave the castle to-night,' and so the ghost of Donald vanished, and the young man was left sitting in the hall alone. Donald died in Edinburgh and was buried there; but after his death, as during his life, his spirit walked about here until the family was compelled to leave. It was a fine place once, but it has been crumbling away year by year, and is now broken and hollow like a witch's tooth. The story I have told you is devoutly believed by all the fishermen, herdsmen, and milkmaids in the neighbourhood. I think Mr Maciver, the clergyman at Kilmuir, is the only person in the neighbourhood who has no faith

in it." This ghost story the photographer capped by another, and when that was finished we went to bed.

Next morning we went out to inspect the old castle, and found it a mere shell. Compared with its appearance the night before, when it stood in relief against the red sky, it was strangely unimpressive; a fragment of a tower and a portion of flanking wall stood erect; there were traces of building down on the slope near the sea, but all the rest was a mere rubble of fallen masonry. It had been despoiled in every way; the elements had worn and battered it, the people of the district had for years back made it a quarry, and built out of it dwellings, out-houses, and dikes—making the past serve the purposes of the present. Sheep destined for the London market were cropping the herbage around its base—suggesting curious comparisons, and bringing into keener contrast antiquity and to-day. While we were loitering about the ruins the photographer came up, and under his guidance we went to visit Kilmuir churchyard, in which Flora Macdonald rests. We went along the stony road down which we had driven the night pre-

viously—the cliffs lately so rosy, gray enough now, and the seethe of the fresh sea amongst the boulders and shingle beneath rather exhilarating than otherwise. After a walk of about a couple of miles we left the road, climbed up a grassy ascent, and found the churchyard there, enclosed by a low stone wall. Everything was in hideous disrepair. The gate was open, the tomb-stones were broken and defaced, and above the grave of the heroine nettles were growing more luxuriously than any crop I had yet had the good fortune to behold in the island. Skye has only one historical grave to dress—and she leaves it *so*. On expressing our surprise to the photographer, he told us that a London sculptor passing that way, and whose heart burned within him at the sight, had offered at several dinner-tables in the district to execute a bronze medallion of the famous lady, gratis, provided his guests would undertake to have it properly placed, and to a have fitting inscription carved upon the pedestal. "The proposal was made, I know," said the photographer, "for the sculptor told me about it himself. His proposal has not been taken up, nor is it likely to be taken

up now. The country which treats the grave of a heroine after that fashion is not worthy to have a heroine. Still,"—he went eyeing the place critically, with his head a little to one side—"it makes a picturesque photograph as it stands—perhaps better than if it were neat and tidy." We plucked a nettle from the grave and then returned to Duntulm to breakfast.

Shortly after breakfast our dog-cart was at the door, and followed by Duntulm and the photographer in a similar machine, we were on our way to Quirang. A drive of a couple of hours brought us to the base of the singular mountain. Tilting our vehicles, leaving the horses to roam about picking the short grass, and carrying with us materials for luncheon on the crest, we began the ascent. The day was fine, the sky cloudless, and in an hour we were toiling past the rocky spire of the needle, and in fifteen minutes thereafter, we reached the flat green plateau on the top. Here we lunched and sang songs, and made mock heroic speeches in proposing each other's health. I had ascended the Quirang before in rain, and wind, and vapour, and could hardly recognise it now under

the different atmospherical conditions. Then every stone was slippery, every runnel a torrent, the top of the needle lost in the flying mist, everything looking spectral, weird, and abnormal. On the present occasion, we saw it in fair sunlight; and what the basalt columns, the shattered precipices, the projecting spiry rocks lost in terror they gained in beauty. Reclining on the soft green grass—strange to find grass so girdled by fantastic crags—we had, through fissures and the rents of ancient earthquake, the loveliest peeps of the map-like under world swathed in faint sea azure. An hour, perhaps, we lay there; and then began the long descent. When we reached the dog-carts we exchanged a parting cup, and then Duntulm and the photographer returned home, and we hied on to Uig.

Arriving at Uig we dined—the bill of fare identical with that on the preceding day; the hard-boiled eggs, only a shade harder boiled perhaps; and then having settled with the kilted landlord—the charge wondrously moderate—we got out our own horse, and with the setting sun making splendid the Minch behind us, we started for Portree. It was eleven P.M. before we reached the little town,

the moon was shining clearly, a stray candle or two twinkling in the houses, and when we reached the hotel door the building was lighted up—it had been a fair day, the prices for cattle were good, and over whisky punch farmer and drover were fraternising.

Next morning, in the soft sky was the wild outline of the Cuchullins, with which we were again to make acquaintance. Somehow these hills never weary, you never become familiar with them, intimacy can no more stale them than it could the beauty of Cleopatra. From the hotel door I regarded them with as much interest as when, from the deck of the steamer off Ardnamurchan ten years ago, I first beheld them with their clouds on the horizon. While at breakfast in the public room, farmer and drover dropped in—the more fiery-throated drinking pale ale instead of tea. After breakfast we were again in the dog-cart driving leisurely toward Sligachan—the wonderful mountains beyond gradually losing tenderness of morning hue and growing worn and hoary, standing with sharper edges against the light, becoming rough with rocky knob and buttress, and grayly wrinkled

with ravines. When we reached the inn we found it full of company, bells continually jangling, half a dozen machines at the door, and a party of gentlemen in knickerbockers starting with rods and fishing-baskets. Here we returned the dog-cart to the landlord, and began to address ourselves to the desolate glen stretching between the inn and Camasunary.

In Glen Sligachan, although you lose sight of the Cuchullins proper, you are surrounded by their outlying and far-radiating spurs. The glen is some eight miles in length, and is wild and desolate beyond conception. Walking along, too, the reticulations of the hills are picked out with that pale greenish tint, which I had noted as characteristic of the hills seen from Lord Macdonald's deer forest, and which gives one the idea of the overflow of chemical fluids, of metallic corrosions and discolorations. There is no proper path, and you walk in the loose *débris* of torrents; and in Glen Sligachan, as in many other parts of Skye, the scenery curiously repels you, and drives you in on yourself. You have a quickened sense of your own individuality. The enormous bulks, their gradual

recedings to invisible crests, their utter movelessness, their austere silence, daunt you. You are conscious of their presence, and you hardly care to speak lest you be overheard. You can't laugh. You would not crack a joke for the world. Glen Sligachan would be the place to do a little bit of self-examination in. There you would have a sense of your own meannesses, selfishnesses, paltry evasions of truth and duty, and find out what a shabby fellow you at heart are—and looking up to your silent father-confessors, you would find no mercy in their grim faces. I do not know what effect mountains have on the people who live habitually amongst them, but the stranger they make serious and grave at heart. Through this glen we trudged silently enough, and when two-thirds of the distance had been accomplished, it was with a feeling of relief that a lake was descried ahead. The sight of anything mobile, of an element that could glitter and dimple and dance, took away from the sense of the stony eternities, gray and wrinkled as with the traces of long-forgotten passion, listening for ever, dumb for ever. After rounding the lake, which plashed merrily on

its margin, and clambering over a long waste of boulder, we saw as we ascended a low flank of Blaavin, the Bay of Camasunary, the house, and the very boat which M'Ian had borrowed on the day we went to visit Loch Coruisk, below us. The tobacco-less man was nowhere visible, and I marvelled whether his messenger had yet returned from Broadford.

When we got to the top of the hill we had to descend the slope to Kilmaree; and as on my return from Loch Coruisk I had come down pleasantly under the guidance of M'Ian, I fancied, naturally enough, that I could act as guide on the present occasion. But there is a knack in descending hills as there is in everything else. First of all, I lost the narrow footpath at the top; then as we were bound to reach Loch Eishart, and as Loch Eishart lay below us distinctly visible, I led directly for it; but somehow we were getting continually on the wrong bank of a pestilent stream, which, through chasm and ravine, found its way to the sea by apparently the most circuitous of courses. This stream we forded a dozen times at the least, and sometimes in imminent danger of a ducking.

It was now late in the afternoon, and the weather had changed. The tops of the hills began to be lost in mist, and long lines of sea fog to creep along the lower grounds. There was at intervals a slow drizzle of rain. Fetching a cunning circuit, as I supposed, we found the inevitable stream again in our front, and got across it with difficulty —happily for the last time. After we had proceeded about a hundred yards we came upon the lost pathway, and in fifteen minutes thereafter we were standing upon the shore of the Loch watching the flying scud of Atlantic mist, and the green waves rolling underneath with their white caps on.

The question now arose—By what means could we reach Mr M'Ian? There was no ferry at Kilmaree, but sundry boats were drawn up on the shore, and a couple were bobbing on the restless water at the stony pier. There were the boats certainly enough, but where were the boatmen? In the neighbourhood men could surely be obtained who, for a consideration, would take us across. We directed our steps to the lodge at Kilmaree, which seemed untenanted, and after some little trouble

penetrated into the region of the offices and outhouses. Here we found a couple of men chopping sticks, and to them my companion—who as a man of business and learned in the law was the spokesman on such occasions—addressed himself. "You want to go over to Mr M'Ian's tonight?" said the elder, desisting from his task, and standing up with his axe in his hand. "Yes, we are particularly anxious to get across. Can you take us?" "I don't know; you see we are no ferrymen, an' if we take you across we must leave our work." "Of course you must; but we'll pay you for your trouble." Here the two men exchanged a sentence or two of Gaelic, and then the elder wood-chopper asked, "Do you know Mr M'Ian?" "Oh, yes, we know him very well." "Does he expect you this night?" "No; but we are anxious to see him, and he will be glad to see us." "I 'm no sure we can take you across," said the man hesitatingly; "you see the master is from home, an' the wind is rising, an' we 're no ferrymen, an' we 'll need to borrow a boat, an'"—here he hesitated still more—"it would cost you something." "Of course it will. What will you

expect." "Wad you think ten shillings too much?" "No, we 'll give you ten shillings," said Fellowes, clinching the bargain. "And," said I, coming in like a swift charge of lancers on a half-disorganised battalion, and making victory complete, "we 'll give you a glass of spirits at the house, too, when you get across." The men then threw down their axes, put on their jackets, which hung on nails on the walls, and talking busily in Gaelic, led the way to the little stony pier where the boats were moored.

"There 's a gale rising," said one of the men, as he pulled in a boat to the pier by a rope, "an' it 'll no be easy taking you across, and still harder to get back ourselves." As, however, to this expression of opinion we made no response, the men busied themselves with getting the boat to rights, testing the rollock pins, rolling in stones for ballast, examining the sail and ropes, and such like matters. In a short time we took our seats, and then the men pulled slowly out to sea in the opposite direction from Mr M'Ian's house, in order to catch the wind, which was blowing freshly inland. The course of the boat was then changed, the oars shipped, the sail shaken out, and away we went

through the green seas with long lurches, the foam gathering up high at the bows, hissing along the sides, and forming a long white wake behind. The elder man sat with the rope of the sail in his hand, and taking a shrewd squint at the weather at intervals. When not so engaged, he was disposed to be talkative. "He's a fine gentleman, Mr M'Ian, a vera fine gentleman; an' vera good to the poor." "I understand," I said, "that he is the most generous of mankind." "He is that; he never lets a poor man go past his door without a meal. Maybe, sir, ye'll be a friend o' his?" "Yes, both of us are friends of his, and friends of his son's too." "Maybe ye'll be a relation of his?—he has many relations in the south country." "No," I said, "no relation, only a friend. Do you smoke?" "Oh, yes, but I have forgot my spleuchan." "I can provide you with tobacco," I said, and so when his pipe was lighted he became silent.

We were now two-thirds across, and the white watery mists hung low on the familiar coast as we approached. Gradually the well-known objects became defined in the evening light—the clumps of birch-wood, the huts seated on the shore, the

house, the cliffs behind on which the clouds lay half-way down. When we drew near the stony quay we noticed that we were the subjects of considerable speculation. It was but seldom that a boat stood across from the Strathaird coast, and by our glass we could see a group of the men-servants standing at the corner of the black kitchen watching our movements, and Mr M'Ian himself coming out with his telescope. When the keel grated on the pebbles we got out. "Now, my men," said Fellowes, "come up to the house and have your promised glass of spirits!" To our astonishment the men declined; they could not wait, they were going back immediately. "But you must come," said my companion, who acted as purser, "for before I can pay you I must get Mr M'Ian to change me a sovereign. Come along." We climbed up to the house, and were welcomed by Mr M'Ian, father and son, in the ivy-covered porch. "By the way," said Fellowes, "I wish you to change me a sovereign, as we have ten shillings to pay these men." "Did the scoundrels charge that sum for bringing you over? It's extortion; five shillings is quite enough. Let me go and speak to

them." "But," remonstrated Fellowes, "we don't consider the charge immoderate: we made the bargain with them: and so anxious were we to be here that we would willingly have paid them double." "Don't talk to me," cried M'Ian, as he put on his hat and seized his stick. "Why, you rascals, did you charge these gentlemen ten shillings for taking them across the Loch? You know you are well enough paid if you get half." "Sir," said the elder man respectfully, while both touched their bonnets, "we 'll just take what you please; just anything you like, Mr M'Ian." "Don't you see the mischief you do and the discredit you bring on the country by this kind of thing? Every summer the big lying blackguard *Times* is crammed with complaints of tourists who have been cheated by you and the like of you—although I don't believe half the stories. These fools"—here the old gentleman made reference to us by a rapid backward chuck of his thumb—"may go home to the south and write to the newspapers about you." "The bargain the gentlemen made was ten shillings," said the man, "but if you think we have asked too much we 'll take six. But it's for your sake

we'll take it, not for theirs." "They're honest fellows these," cried the old gentleman, as he poured the coins into the palm of the elder man; "Alick, bring them out a dram." The dram, prefaced by a word or two of Gaelic, to which Mr M'Ian nodded, was duly swallowed, and the men, touching their bonnets, descended to their boat. The old gentleman led the way into the house, and we had no sooner reached the porch than my companion remembered that he had left something, and ran down to fetch it. He returned in a little while, and in the course of the evening he gave me to understand that he had seen the boatmen, and fully implemented his promise.

The wind had changed during the night, and next morning broke forth gloriously—not a speck of vapour on the Cuchullins; the long stretch of Strathaird wonderfully distinct; the Loch bright in sunlight. When we got down to breakfast we found Mr M'Ian alone. His son, he said, had been on the hill since four o'clock in the morning gathering the lambs together, and that about noon he and his assistants would be branding them at the fank. When breakfast was over,—Fellowes, having letters

to write, remained in-doors,—I and the old gentleman went out. We went up the glen, and as we drew near the fank we saw a number of men standing about, their plaids thrown on the turfen walls, with sheep-dogs couched thereupon; a thick column of peat-smoke rising up, smelt easily at the distance of half a mile; no sheep were visible, but the air was filled with bleatings,—undulating with the clear plaintive trebles of innumerable ewes, and the hoarser *baa* of tups. When we arrived we found the narrow chambers and compartments at one end of the fank crowded with lambs, so closely wedged together that they could hardly move, and between these chambers and compartments temporary barriers erected, so that no animal could pass from one to the other. The shepherds must have had severe work of it that morning. It was as yet only eleven o'clock, and since early dawn they and their dogs had coursed over an area of ten miles, sweeping every hill face, visiting every glen, and driving down rills of sheep toward this central spot. Having got the animals down, the business of assortment began. The most perfect ewes—destined to be the mothers

of the next brood of lambs on the farm—were placed in one chamber; the second best, whose fate it was to be sold at Inverness, were placed in a congeries of compartments, the one opening into the other; the inferior qualities—*shots*, as they are technically called—occupied a place by themselves: these also to be sold at Inverness, but at lower prices than the others. The fank is a large square enclosure; the compartments into which the bleating flocks were huddled occupied about one half of the walled-in space, the remainder being perfectly vacant. One of the compartments opened into this space, but a temporary barrier prevented all egress. Just at the mouth of this barrier we could see the white ashes and the dull orange glow of the peat-fire in which some half-dozen branding irons were heating. When everything was prepared two or three men entered into this open space. One took his seat on a large smooth stone by the side of the peat-fire, a second vaulted into the struggling mass of heads and fleeces, a third opened the barrier slightly, lugged out a struggling lamb by the horns, and consigned it to the care of the man seated on the smooth

stone. This worthy got the animal dexterously between his legs, so that it was unable to struggle, laid its head down on his thigh, seized from the orange glow of the smouldering peat-fire one of the red-hot heating irons, and with a hiss, and a slight curl of smoke, drew it in a diagonal direction across its nose. Before the animal was sufficiently branded the iron had to be applied twice or thrice. It was then released, and trotted bleating into the open space, perhaps making a curious bound on the way as if in bravado, or shaking its head hurriedly as if snuff had been thrown into its eyes. All day this branding goes on. The peat-fire is replenished when needed; another man takes his seat on the smooth stone; by two o'clock a string of women bring up dinner from the house, and all the while, young M'Ian sits on the turfen wall, note-book in hand, setting down the number of the lambs and their respective qualities. Every farmer has his own peculiar brand, and by it he can identify a member of his stock if it should go astray. The brand is to the farmer what a trade mark is to a manufacturer. These brands are familiar to the drovers even as the

brands of wine and cigars are familiar to the connoisseurs in these articles. The operation looks a cruel one, but it is not perfectly clear that the sheep suffer much under it. While under the iron they are perfectly quiet,—they neither bleat nor struggle, and when they get off they make no sign of discomfort save the high bound or the restless shake of the head already mentioned—if indeed these are signs of discomfort—a conclusion which no sheep farmer will in anywise allow. In a minute or so they are cropping herbage in the open space of the fank, or if the day is warm, lying down in the cool shadows of the walls as composedly as if nothing had happened.

Leaning against the fank walls we looked on for about an hour, by which time a couple of hundred lambs had been branded, and then we went up the glen to inspect a mare and foal of which Mr M'Ian was specially proud. Returning in the direction of the house, the old gentleman pointed out what trenching had been done, what walls had been built in my absence, and showed me on the other side of the stream what brushwood he meant to clear next spring for potatoes, what fields he would give to the people for their crops, what fields he

would reserve for his own use. Flowing on in this way with scheme and petty detail of farm work, he suddenly turned round on me with a queer look in his face. "Isn't it odd that a fellow like me, standing on the brink of the grave, should go pottering about day after day thinking of turnips and oats, tups and ewes, cows and foals? The chances are that the oats I sow I shall never live to reap—that I shall be gone before the blossom comes on my potatoes."

The strangeness of it had often struck me before, but I said nothing.

"I suppose it is best that I should take an interest in these things," went on the old gentleman. "Death is so near me that I can hear him as if it were through a crazy partition. I know he is there. I can hear him moving about continually. My interest in the farm is the partition that divides us. If it were away I should be with him face to face."

Mr M'Ian was perhaps the oldest man in the island, and he did not dislike talking about his advanced age. A man at fifty-five, perhaps, wishes to be considered younger than he really is. The man above ninety has outlived that vanity. He is

usually as proud of the years he has numbered as the commander of the battles he has won, or the millionaire of the wealth he has acquired. In respect of his great age, such a one is singular amongst his fellows. After a little pause Mr M'Ian flowed on:

"I remember very well the night the century came in. My regiment was then lying in the town of Galway in Ireland. We were all at supper that evening at the quarters of Major M'Manus, our commanding officer. Very merry we were, singing songs and toasting the belles we knew. Well, when twelve o'clock struck the major rose and proposed in a flowing bowl the health of the stranger—the nineteenth century—coupled with the hope that it would be a better century than the other. I'm not sure that it has been a whit better, so far at least as it has gone. For thirty years I have been the sole survivor of that merry table."

"Sixty-five years is a long time to look back, Mr M'Ian."

The old gentleman walked on laughing to himself. "What fools men are—doctors especially! I was very ill shortly after with a liver complaint,

and was sent to Edinburgh to consult the great doctors and professors there. They told me I was dying; that I had not many months to live. The fools! they are dead, their sons are dead, and here I am, able to go about yet. I suppose they thought that I would take their stuffs."

By this time we had reached the house. Mr M'Ian left his white hat and staff in the porch: he then went to the cupboard and took out a small spirit case in which he kept bitters cunningly compounded. He gave Fellowes and myself—Fellowes had finished his letters by this time—a tiny glassful, took the same amount himself. We then all went out and sat down on a rocky knoll near the house which looked seaward, and talked about Sir John Moore and Wellington till dinner time.

We stayed with the M'Ians for a couple of days, and on the third we drove over to Ardvasar to catch the steamer there that afternoon on its way to Portree.

As we drove slowly up the glen, my companion said, "That old gentleman is to my mind worth Blaavin, Coruisk, Glen Sligachan, and all the rest

of it. In his own way he is just as picturesque and strange as they are. When he goes, the island will have lost one of its peculiar charms."

"He is a thorough Islesman," said I; "and for him Blaavin forms as appropriate a background as the desert for the Arab, or the prairie for the Pawnee Indian. When he dies it will be like the dying of the last eagle. He is about the end of the old stock. The younger generation of Skyemen will never be like their fathers. They have more general information than their elders, they have fewer prejudices, they are more amenable to advice, much less stubborn and self-willed—but they are by comparison characterless. In a few years, when they will have the island in their own hands, better sheep will be produced I have no doubt, finer qualities of wool will be sent south, grand hotels will be erected here and there—but for all that Skye will have become tame: it will have lost that unpurchaseable something—human character; and will resemble Blaavin shorn of its mist-wreaths."

When we reached the top of the glen, and dropped down on the Parliamentary Road near the

lake of water lilies, we held our way to the right, toward the point of Sleat. We passed the farm of Knock, the white outhouses, the church and school-house, the old castle on the shore, and driving along, we could pleasantly depasture our eyes on the cultivated ground, with a picturesque hut perched here and there; the towering masses of the Knoydart hills and the Sound of Sleat between. Sleat is the best wooded, the sunniest, and most carefully cultivated portion of the island; and passing along the road the traveller is struck with signs of blithe industry and contentment. As you draw near Armadale Castle you can hardly believe that you are in Skye at all. The hedges are as trim as English hedges, the larch plantations which cover the faces of the low hills that look towards the sea are not to be surpassed by any larch plantations in the country. The Armadale home farm is a model of neatness, the Armadale porter-lodges are neat and white; and when, through openings of really noble trees, you obtain a glimpse of the castle itself, a handsome modern-looking building rising from sweeps of closely-shaven lawn, you find it hard to believe that you are within a few miles

of the moory desolation that stretches between Isle Oronsay and Broadford. Great lords and great seats, independent of the food they provide the imagination, are of the highest practical uses to a country. From far Duntulm Macdonald has come here and settled, and around him to their very tops the stony hills laugh in green. Great is the power of gold. Drop a sovereign into the hat of the mendicant seated by the wayside and into his face you bring a pleasant light. Bestow on land what gold can purchase, Labour, and of the stoniest aridity you make an emerald.

Ardvasar is situated about the distance of a mile from the Armadale plantations, and counts perhaps some twenty houses. A plain inn stands by the wayside, where refreshments may be procured; there is a merchant's shop filled with goods of the most miscellaneous description; in this little place also resides a most important personage—the agent of the Messrs Hutcheson, who is learned in the comings and goings of the steamers. On our arrival we learned from the agent that the steamer on the present occasion would be unusually late, as she had not yet been sighted between Ardna-

murchan and Eig. In all probability she would not be off Ardvasar till ten P.M. It is difficult to kill time anywhere; but at this little Skye clachan it is more difficult than almost anywhere else. We fed the horse, and returned it and the dog-cart to Mr M'Ian. We sat in the inn and looked aimlessly out of the window; we walked along the ravine, and saw the stream sleeping in brown pools, and then hurrying on in tiny waterfalls; we watched the young barbarians at play in the wide green in front of the houses; we lounged in the merchant's shop; we climbed to the top of eminences and looked seaward, and imagined fondly that we beheld a streak of steamer smoke on the horizon. The afternoon wore away, and then we had tea at the inn. By this the steamer had been visible for some little time, and had gone in to Eig. After tea we carried our traps down to the stony pier and placed them in the boat which would convey us to the steamer when she lay to in the bay. Thereafter we spent an hour in watching men blasting a huge rock in a quarry close at hand. We saw the train laid and lighted, the men scuttling off, and then there was a dull report, and the

huge rock tumbled quietly over in ruins. When we got back to the pier, passengers were gathering: drovers with their dogs—ancient women in scarlet plaids and white caps, going on to Balmacara or Kyle—a sailor, fresh from China, dressed in his best clothes, with a slate-coloured parrot in a wicker cage, which he was conveying to some young people at Broadford. On the stony pier we waited for a considerable time, and then Mr Hutcheson's agent, accompanied by some half dozen men, came down in a hurry; into the boat we were all bundled, drovers, dogs, ancient women, sailor, parrot, and all, the boat shoved off, the agent stood up in the bow, the men bent to their oars, and by the time we were twenty boat-lengths from the pier the *Clansman* had slid into the bay opposite the castle and lay to, letting off volumes of noisy steam.

When the summer night was closing the *Clansman* steamed out of Armadale Bay. Two or three ladies were yet visible on the deck. Wrapped in their plaids, and with their dogs around them, drovers were smoking amidships; sportsmen in knickerbockers were smoking on the hurricane

deck; and from the steerage came at intervals a burst of canine thunder from the leashes of pointers and setters congregated there. As the night fell the air grew cold, the last lady disappeared, the sportsmen withdrew from their airy perches, amidships the pipe of the drover became a point of intense red. In the lighted cabin gentlemen were drinking whisky punch, and discussing, as their moods went, politics, the weather, the fluctuations in the price of stock, and the condition of grouse. Among these we sat; and my companion fell into conversation with a young man of an excited manner and a restless eye. I could see at a glance that he belonged to the same class as my tobacco-less friend of Glen Sligachan. On Fellowes he bestowed his entire biography, made known to him the name of his family—which was, by the way, a noble one—volunteered the information that he had served in the Mediterranean squadron, that he had been tried by a court martial for a misdemeanour of which he was entirely guiltless, and had through the testimony of nefarious witnesses been dismissed the service. While all this talk was going on the steward and his assistants had swept

away the glasses from the saloon table, and from the oddest corners and receptacles were now drawing out pillows, sheets, and blankets. In a trice everything became something else; the sofas of the saloon became beds, the tables of the saloon became beds, beds were spread on the saloon floor, beds were extemporised near the cabin windows. When the transformation had been completed, and several of the passengers had coiled themselves comfortably in their blankets, the remainder struggling with their boots, or in various stages of dishabille, the ex-naval man suddenly called out "Steward!"

That functionary looked in at the saloon door in an instant.

"Bring me a glass of brandy and water."

"It's quite impossible, Mr ——," said the steward; "the spirit-room is shut for the night. Besides, you have had a dozen glasses of brandy and water to-day already. You had better go to bed, sir."

"Didn't I tell you," said the ex-naval man, addressing Fellowes, who had by this time got his coat and vest off; "didn't I tell you that the whole

world is in a conspiracy against me? It makes a dead set at me. That fellow now is as great a foe of mine as was the commodore at Malta."

Fellowes made no reply, and got into bed. I followed his example. The ex-naval man sat gloomily alone for a while, and then with the assistance of the steward he undressed and clambered into a cool berth beside one of the cabin windows. Thereafter the lights were turned low.

I could not sleep, however; the stifling air of the place, in which there lived a faint odour of hot brandy and water, and the constant throb throb of the engines, kept me awake. I turned from one side to the other, till at last my attention was attracted by the movements of my strange friend opposite. He raised his head stealthily and took covert survey of the saloon; then he leant on his elbow; then he sat upright in his berth. That feat accomplished, he began to pour forth to some imaginary auditor the story of his wrongs.

He had not gone on long when a white night-capped head bounced up in a far corner of the dim saloon. "Will you be good enough," said the pale apparition in a severe voice, "to go to sleep? It's

monstrous, sir, that you should disturb gentlemen at this hour of the night by your nonsensical speeches."

At the sight and the voice the ex-naval man sank into his berth as suddenly as an alarmed beaver sinks into his dam, and there was silence for a time.

Shortly, from the berth, I saw the ex-naval man's head rising as stealthily as the head of a blackcock above a bunch of rushes. Again he sat up in bed, and again to the same invisible auditor he confided his peculiar griefs.

"Confound you, sir." "What do you mean, sir?" and at the half-dozen white apparitions confronting him the ex-naval man again dived.

In about ten minutes the head opposite began again to stir. Never from ambush did Indian warrior rise more noiselessly than did the ex-naval man from his blankets. He paused for a little on his elbow, looked about him cautiously, got into a sitting position, and began a third harangue.

"What the devil!" "This is intolerable!" "Steward, steward!" "Send the madman on deck;" and the saloon rose *en masse* against the dis-

turber of its rest. The steward came running in at the outcry, but the ex-naval man had ducked under like a shot, and was snoring away in simulated slumber as if he had been the Seven Sleepers rolled into one.

That night he disturbed our rest no more, and shortly after I fell asleep.

A fierce trampling on deck, and the noise of the crane hoisting the cargo from the deep recesses of the hold awoke me. I dressed and went above. The punctual sun was up and at his work. We were off a strip of sandy beach, with a row of white houses stretching along it, and with low rocky hills behind the houses. Some half-dozen deeply-laden shore boats were leaving the side of the steamer. Then a cow was brought forward, a door was opened in the bulwarks, and the animal quietly shoved out. Crummie disappeared with a considerable plunge, and came to the surface somewhat scant of breath, and with her mind in a state of utter bewilderment. A boat was in readiness; by a deft hand a coil of rope was fastened around the horns, the rowers bent to their task, and Crummie was towed ashore in triumph, and on reaching

it seemed nothing the worse of her unexpected plunge forth.

The noisy steam was then shut off; from the moving paddles great belts of pale-green foam rushed out and died away far astern; the strip of beach, the white houses with the low rocky hills behind, began to disappear, and the steamer stood directly for Portree, which place was reached in time for breakfast. We then drove to the Landlord's, and on alighting I found my friend John Penruddock marching up and down on the gravel in front of the house.

JOHN PENRUDDOCK.

PENRUDDOCK was rather a hero of mine. He was as tall, muscular, and broad-shouldered as the men whom Mr Kingsley delights to paint, and his heart was as tender as his head was shrewd. A loquacious knave could not take him in, and from his door a beggar would not be sent empty away. The pressure of his mighty hand when he met you gave you some idea of what the clenched fist would be with its iron ridge of knuckles. He was the healthiest-minded man I have ever met in my walk through life. He was strong yet gentle, pious yet without the slightest tincture of cant or dogmatism; and his mind was no more infested with megrims, or vanity, or hypochondriasis, or sentimentality, than the wind-swept sky of June with vapours. He was loyal and affectionate to the backbone: he stuck to his friends to the last. Pen was like the run of ordinary mortals while your day of prosperity re-

mained, but when your night of difficulty fell he came out like a lighthouse, and sent you rays of encouragement and help.

Pen had farms in Ireland as well as in Skye, and it was when on a visit to him in Ulster some years since that I became acquainted with his homely but enduring merits. For years I had not seen such a man. There was a reality and honest stuff in him, which in living with him and watching his daily goings on revealed itself hour by hour, quite new to me. The people I had been accustomed to meet, talk with, live with, were different. The tendency of each of these was towards art in one form or other. And there was a certain sadness somehow in the contemplation of them. They fought and strove bravely; but like the Old Guard at Waterloo, it was brave fighting on a lost field. After years of toil there were irremediable defects in that man's picture; fatal flaws in that man's book. In all their efforts were failure and repulse, apparent to some extent to themselves, plain enough to the passionless looker-on. That resolute, hopeless climbing of heaven was, according to the mood, a thing to provoke a jest

or a sigh. With Penruddock all was different. What he strove after he accomplished. He had a cheerful mastery over circumstances. All things went well with him. His horses ploughed for him, his servants reaped for him, his mills ground for him, successfully. The very winds and dews of heaven were to him helps and aids. Year after year his crops grew, yellowed, were cut down and gathered into barns, and men fed thereupon; and year after year there lay an increasing balance at his banker's. This continual, ever-victorious activity seemed strange to me—a new thing under the sun. We usually think that poets, painters, and the like, are finer, more heroical, than cultivators of the ground. But does the production of a questionable book really surpass in merit the production of a field of unquestionable turnips? Perhaps in the severe eyes of the gods the production of a wooden porringer, water-tight, and fit for household uses, is of more account than the rearing of a tower of Babel, *meant* to reach to heaven. Alas! that so many must work on these Babel towers; cannot help toiling on them to the very death, though every stone is

heaved into its place with weariness and mortal pain; though when the life of the builder is wasted out on it, it is fit habitation for no creature, can shelter no one from rain or snow—but towering in the eyes of men a *Folly* (as the Scotch phrase it) after all.

I like to recall my six weeks' sojourn in sunny Ulster with my friend. I like to recall the rows of whity-green willows that bordered the slow streams; the yellow flax fields with their azure flowers, reminding one of the maidens in German ballads; the flax tanks and windmills; the dark-haired girls embroidering muslins before the doors, and stealing the while the hearts of sheepish sweethearts leaning against the cottage walls, by soft blarney and quick glances; the fields in which a cow, a donkey, half a dozen long-legged porkers—looking for all the world like pigs on stilts—cocks and hens, ducks and geese promiscuously fed; and, above all, I like to recall that somnolent Sunday afternoon in the little uncomfortably-seated Presbyterian church, when—two-thirds of the congregation asleep, the precentor soundest of all, and the good clergyman illustrating the doctrine of the Perseverance of the

Saints by a toddler at its mother's knee attempting to walk, falling and bumping its forehead, getting picked up, and in a little while, although the bump had grown to the size of an egg, spurring and struggling to get to the floor once again—my eye wandered to the open church door, and in the sunshine saw a feeding bee fold its wings on a flower and swing there in the wind, and I forgot for a while drawling shepherd and slumbering flock. These are trifles, but they are pleasant trifles. Staying with Pen, however, an event of importance did occur.

It was arranged that we should go to the fair at 'Keady; but Pen was obliged on the day immediately preceding to leave his farm at Arranmore on matter of important business. It was a wretched day of rain, and I began to tremble for the morrow. After dinner the storm abated, and the dull dripping afternoon set in. While a distempered sunset flushed the west the heavy carts from the fields came rolling into the courtyard, the horses fetlock-deep in clay and steaming like ovens. Then, at the sound of the bell, the labourers came, wet, weary, sickles hang-

ing over their arms, yet with spirits merry enough. These the capacious kitchen received, where they found supper spread. It grew dark earlier than usual, and more silent. The mill-wheel rushed louder in the swollen stream, and lights began to glimmer here and there in the dusty windows. Penruddock had not yet come; he was not due for a couple of hours. Time began to hang heavily; so slipping to bed I solved every difficulty by falling soundly asleep.

The lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep, the barking of dogs, and the loud voices of men in the courtyard beneath, awoke me shortly after dawn. In the silence that followed I again fell asleep, and was roused at last by the clangour of the breakfast bell. When I got up the sun was streaming gloriously through the latticed window; heaven was all the gayer and brighter for yesterday's gloom and sulky tears, and the rooks were cawing and flapping cheerfully in the trees above. When I entered the breakfast-room Pen was already there, and the tea-urn was bubbling on the table.

At the close of the meal Tim brought the dog-cart to the door. Pen glanced at his watch. "We

have hit the time exactly, and will arrive as soon as Mick and the cattle." There was an encouraging chir-r-r, a flick of the whip, and in a trice we were across the bridge and pegging along the highway at a great pace.

After proceeding about a mile, we turned into a narrow path which gradually led us up into a wild irregular country. Corn-fields, flax-tanks, and sunny pasture lands, dotted with sheep, were left behind as up-hill we tugged, and reached at last a level stretch of purple moor and black peat bog. Sometimes for a mile the ground was black with pyramids of peat; at other times the road wriggled before us through a dark olive morass, enlivened here and there with patches of treacherous green; the sound of our wheels startling into flight the shy and solitary birds native to the region. Ever and anon, too, when we gained sufficient elevation, we could see the great waves of the landscape rolling in clear morning light away to the horizon; each wave crested with farms and belts of woodland, and here and there wreaths of smoke rising up from hollows where towns and villages lay hid. After a while the road grew smoother, and afar the

little town of Keady sparkled in the sun, backed by a range of smelting furnaces, the flames tamed by the sunlight, making a restless shimmer in the air, and blotting out everything beyond. Beneath, the high road was covered with sheep and cows, and vehicles of every description, pushing forward to one point; the hill paths also which led down to it were moving threads of life. On the brow of the hill, just before we began to descend, John pulled up for a moment. It was a pretty sight. A few minutes' drive brought us into Keady, and such a busy scene I had never before witnessed. The narrow streets and open spaces were crowded with stalls, cattle, and people, and the press and confusion was so great that our passage to the inn where our machine was to be put up was matter of considerable difficulty. Men, stripped to trousers and shirt, with red hair streaming in the wind, rushed backwards and forwards with horses, giving vent at the same time to the wildest vociferations, while clumps of sporting gentlemen, with straws in their mouths, were inspecting, with critical eyes, the points of the animals. Travelling auctioneers set up their little carts in the streets, and with aston-

ishing effrontery and power of lung harangued the crowd on the worth and cheapness of the articles which they held in their hands. Beggars were very plentiful—disease and deformity their stock-in-trade. Fragments of humanity crawled about upon crutches. Women stretched out shrunken arms. Blind men rolled sightless eyeballs, blessing the passenger when a copper tinkled in their iron jugs—cursing yet more fervently when disappointed in their expectation. In one place a melancholy acrobat in dirty tights and faded tinsel was performing evolutions with a crazy chair on a bit of ragged carpet; he threw somersaults over it; he embraced it firmly, and began spinning along the ground like a wheel, in which performance man and chair seemed to lose their individuality and become one as it were; and at the close of every feat he stood erect with that indescribable curve of the right hand which should always be followed by thunders of applause, the clown meanwhile rolling in ecstasies of admiration in the sawdust. Alas! no applause followed the exertions of the artist. The tights were getting more threadbare and dingy. His hollow face was covered with perspiration, and

there was but the sparsest sprinkling of halfpence. I threw him a shilling, but it rolled among the spectators' feet, and was lost in the dust. He groped about in search of it for some little time, and then came back to his carpet and his crazy chair. Poor fellow! he looked as if he were used to that kind of thing. There were many pretty faces among the girls, and scores of them were walking about in holiday dresses—rosy-faced lasses, with black hair, and blue eyes shadowed by long dark eyelashes. How they laughed, and how sweetly the brogue melted from their lips in reply to the ardent blarney of their sweethearts. At last we reached an open square, or cross, as it would be called in Scotland, more crowded, if possible, than the narrow streets. Hordes of cattle bellowed here. Here were sheep from the large farms standing in clusters of fifties and hundreds; there a clump of five or six, with the widow in her clean cap sitting beside them. Many an hour ago she and they started from the turf hut and the pasture beyond the hills. Heaven send her a ready sale and good prices! In the centre of this open space great benches were erected, heaped with eggs, butter,

cheeses, the proprietors standing behind anxiously awaiting the advances of customers. One section was crowded with sweetmeat stalls, much frequented by girls and their sweethearts. Many a rustic compliment there had for reply a quick glance or a scarlet cheek. Another was devoted to poultry; geese stood about in flocks; bunches of hens were scattered on the ground, their legs tied together; and turkeys, enclosed in wicker baskets, surveyed the scene with quick eyes, their wattles all the while burning with indignation. On reaching the inn which displayed for ensign a swan with two heads afloat on an azure stream, we ordered dinner at three o'clock, and thereafter started on foot to where Penruddock's stock was stationed. It was no easy matter to force a path; cows and sheep were always getting in the way. Now and then an escaped hen would come clucking and flapping among our feet, and once a huge bull, with horns levelled to the charge, came dashing down the street, scattering everything before him. Finally, we reached the spot where Mick and his dogs were keeping watch over the cows and sheep.

"Got here all safe, Mick, I see."

"All safe, sir, not a quarter o' an hour ago."

"Well, I have opened my shop. We'll see how we get on."

By this time the dealers had gathered about, and were closely examining the sheep, and holding whispered consultations. At length an excited-looking man came running forward; plunging his hand into his breeches pocket, he produced therefrom half-a-crown, which he slapped into Penruddock's hand, at the same time crying out "Ten-and-six a head." "Fifteen," said John, returning the coin. "Twelve shillings," said the man, bringing down the coin with tremendous energy; "an' may I niver stir if I'll give another farthin' for the best sheep in Keady." "Fifteen," said John, flinging the half-crown on the ground; "and I don't care whether you stir again or not." By this time a crowd had gathered about, and the chorus began. "There isn't a dacenter man than Mr Penruddock in the market. I've known him iver since he came to the counthry." "Shure an' he is," began another; "he's a jintleman ivery inch. He always gives to the poor man a bit o' baccy, or a glass. Ach, Mr

Loney, *he's* not the one to ax you too high a price. Shure, Mr Penruddock, you 'll come down a sixpence jist to make a bargain." "Is 't Mr Loney that 's goin' to buy?" cried a lame man from the opposite side, and in the opposite interest. "There isn't sich a dealer in county Monaghan as Mr Loney. Of coorse you 'll come down something, Mr Penruddock." "He 's a rich one, too, is Mr Loney," said the lame man, sidling up to John, and winking in a knowing manner, "an' a power o' notes he has in his pocket-book." Mr Loney, who had been whispering with his group a little apart, and who had again made an inspection of the stock, returned the second time to the charge. "Twelve-an'-six," cried he, and again the half-crown was slapped into Penruddock's palm. "Twelve-an'-six, an' not another farthin' to save my soul." "Fifteen," said John, returning the half-crown with equal emphasis; "you know my price, and if you won't take it you can let it stand." The dealer disappeared in huge wrath, and the chorus broke out in praises of both. By this time Mr Loney was again among the sheep; it was plain his heart was set upon the purchase. Every now and then

he caught one, got it between his legs, examined the markings on its face, and tested the depth and quality of its wool. He appeared for the third time, while the lame man and the leader of the opposing chorus seemed coming to blows, so zealous were they in the praises of their respective heroes. "Fourteen," said Mr Loney, again producing the half-crown, spitting into his hand at the same time, as much as to say, he would do the business now. "Fourteen," he cried, crushing the half-crown into Penruddock's hand, and holding it there. "Fourteen, an' divil a rap more I'll give." "Fourteen," said John, as if considering, then throwing back the coin, "Fourteen-and-six, and let it be a bargain."

"Didn't I say," quoth John's chorus leader, looking round him with an air of triumph, "didn't I say that Mr Penruddock's a jintleman? Ye see how he drops the sixpence. I niver saw him do a mane thing yet. Ach, he's the jintleman ivery inch, an' that's saying a dale, considerin' his size."

"Fourteen-and-six be it then," said the dealer, bringing down the coin for the last time. "An' if I take the lot you'll give me two pounds in t' myself?"

"Well, Loney, I don't care although I do," said Penruddock, pocketing the coin at last. A roll of notes was produced, the sum counted out, and the bargain concluded. The next moment Loney was among the sheep, scoring some mark or other on their backs with a piece of red chalk. Penruddock scattered what spare coppers he possessed among the bystanders, and away they went to sing the praises of the next bargain-maker.

Pen turned to me laughing. "This is a nice occupation for a gentleman of respectable birth and liberal education, is it not?"

"Odd. It is amusing to watch the process by which your sheep are converted into bank-notes. Does your friend, Mr Loney, buy the animals for himself?"

"Oh, dear, no. We must have middlemen of one kind or another in this country. Loney is commissioned to purchase, and is allowed so much on the transaction."

By this time a young handsome fellow pushed his horse through the crowd and approached us. "Good morning," cried he to Penruddock. "Any business doing?"

"I have just sold my sheep."

"Good price?"

"Fair. Fourteen and six."

"Ah, not so bad. These cattle, I suppose, are yours? We must try if we can't come to a bargain about them." Dismounting, he gave his horse in keeping to a lad, and he and John went off to inspect the stock.

Business was proceeding briskly on all sides. There was great higgling as to prices, and shillings and half-crowns were tossed in a wonderful manner from palm to palm. Apparently, nothing could be transacted without that ceremony, whatever it might mean. Idlers were everywhere celebrating the merits and "dacency" of the various buyers and sellers. Huge greasy leather pocket-books, of undoubted antiquity, were to be seen in many a hand, and rolls of bank-notes were deftly changing owners. The ground, too, was beginning to clear, and purchasers were driving off their cattle. Many of the dealers who had disposed of stock were taking their ease in the inns. You could see them looking out of the open windows; and occasionally a man whose potations

had been early and excessive went whooping through the crowd. In a short time John returned with his friend.

"Captain Broster," said John, presenting him, "has promised to dine with us at three. Sharp at the hour, mind, for we wish to leave early."

"I'll be punctual as clockwork," said the captain, turning to look after his purchases.

We strolled up and down till three o'clock, and then bent our steps to the inn, where we found Broster waiting. In honour to his guests the landlord himself brought in dinner, and waited with great diligence. When the table was cleared we had punch and cigars, and sat chatting at the open window. The space in front was tolerably clear of cattle now, but dealers were hovering about, standing in clumps, or promenading in parties of twos and threes. But at this point a new element had entered into the scene. It was dinner hour, and many of the forgemen from the furnaces above had come down to see what was going on. Huge, hulking, swarthy-featured fellows they were. Welshmen, chiefly, as I was afterwards told, who, confident in their strength, were at no pains to con-

ceal their contempt for the natives. They, too, mingled in the crowd, but the greater number leaned lazily against the houses, smoking their short pipes, and indulging in the dangerous luxury of "chaffing" the farmers. Many a rude wit-combat was going on, accompanied by roars of laughter, snatches of which we occasionally heard. Broster had been in the Crimea, was wounded at Alma, recovered, went through all the work and privation of the first winter of the siege, got knocked up, came home on sick leave, and having had enough of it, as he frankly confessed, took the opportunity on his father's death, which happened then, to sell out and settle as a farmer on a small property to which he fell heir. He chatted about the events of the war in an easy familiar way, quietly, as if the whole affair had been a game at football; and when courage, strength, and splendid prospects were changed by unseen bullet, or grim bayonet stab, into a rude grave on the bleak plateau, the thing was mentioned as a mere matter of course! Sometimes a comrade's fate met with an expression of soldierly regret, slight and indifferent enough, yet with a certain pathos which no high-flown oration

could reach. For the indifferent tone seemed to acquiesce in destiny, to consider that disappointment had been too common in the life of every man during the last six thousand years to warrant any raving or passionate surprise at this time of day; that in any case our ordinary pulse and breath beat our march to the grave; passion the double-quick; and when it is all over, there is little need for outcry and the shedding of tears over the eternal rest. In the midst of his talk voices rose in one of the apartments below; the noise became altercation, and immediately a kind of struggling or dragging was heard in the flagged passage, and then a tipsy forgeman was unceremoniously shot out into the square, and the inn door closed with an angry bang. The individual seemed to take the indignity in very good part; along he staggered, his hands in his pockets, heedless of the satirical gibes and remarks of his companions, who were smoking beneath our windows. Looking out, we could see that his eyes were closed, as if he scorned the outer world, possessing one so much more satisfactory within himself. As he went he began to sing from sheer excess of happi-

ness, the following stanza coming distinctly to our ears :—

"When I was a chicken as big as a hen,
My mother 'ot me, an' I 'ot her agen ;
My father came in for to see the r-r-rrow,
So I lifted my fist, an' I 'ot him a clow."

"I hope that fellow won't come to grief," said Broster, as the forgeman lurched through a group of countrymen intent on a bargain, and passed on without notice or apology, his eyes closed, and singing as before—

"Ses my mother, ses she, There's a Peeler at hand."

"By Jove, he's down at last, and there'll be the devil to pay!" We looked out, the forgeman was prone in the dust, singing, and apparently unconscious that he had changed his position. A party of farmers were standing around laughing ; one of them had put out his foot and tripped the forgeman as he passed. The next moment a bare-armed black-browed hammersmith strode out from the wall, and, without so much as taking the pipe from his mouth, felled the dealer at a blow, and then looked at his companions as if wishing to be informed if he could do anything in the same way for them. The blow was a match dropped in a

powder magazine. Alelu! to the combat. There were shouts and yells. Insult had been rankling long in the breasts of both parties. Old scores had to be paid off. From every quarter, out of the inns, leaving potheen and ale, down the streets from among the cattle, the dealers came rushing to the fray. The forgemen mustered with alacrity, as if battle were the breath of their nostrils. In a few seconds the square was the scene of a general *mêlée*. The dealers fought with their short heavy sticks; the forgemen had but the weapons nature gave, but their arms were sinewed with iron, and every blow told like a hammer. These last were overpowered for a while, but the alarm had already spread to the furnaces above, and parties of twos and threes came at a run, and flung themselves in to the assistance of their companions. Just at this moment a couple of constables pressed forward into the yelling crowd. A hammersmith came behind one, and seizing his arms, held him, despite his struggles, firmly as in a vice. The other was knocked over and trampled under foot. "Good heavens, murder will be done," cried Broster, lifting his heavy whip from the table; "we must try and

put an end to this disgraceful scene. Will you join me?" "With heart and soul," said Penruddock, "and there is no time to be lost. Come along." At the foot of the stair we found the landlord shaking in every limb. He had locked the door, and was standing in the passage with the key in his hand. "M'Queen, we want out; open the door."

"Shure, jintlemen, you're not goin' just now. You'll be torn to paces if you go."

"If you won't open the door, give me the key, and I'll open it myself."

The landlord passively yielded. Broster unlocked the door, and flung the key down on the flagged passage. "Now, my lads," cried he to half-a-dozen countrymen who were hanging-on spectators on the skirts of the combat, and at the same time twisting his whip-lash tightly round his right hand till the heavy-leaded head became a formidable weapon, a blow from which would be effective on any skull of ordinary susceptibility; "Now, my lads, we are resolved to put an end to this; will you assist us?" The captain's family had been long resident in the county, he was himself personally

known to all of them, and a cheerful "Ay, ay," was the response. "Penruddock, separate them when you can, knock them over when you can't, Welshman or Irishman, it's quite the same." So saying, in we drove. Broster clove a way for himself, distributing his blows with great impartiality, and knocking over the combatants like nine-pins. We soon reached the middle of the square, where the fight was hottest. The captain was swept away in an eddy for a moment, and right in front of Penruddock and myself two men were grappling on the ground. As they rolled over, we saw that one was the hammersmith who had caused the whole affray. We flung ourselves upon them, and dragged them up. The dealer, with whom I was more particularly engaged, had got the worst of it, and plainly wasn't sorry to be released from the clutches of his antagonist. With his foe it was different. His slow sullen blood was fairly in a blaze, and when Pen pushed him aside, he dashed at him and struck him a severe blow on the face. In a twinkling Penruddock's coat was off, while the faintest stream of blood trickled from his upper lip. "Well, my man," said he, as he stood up

ready for action, "if that's the game you mean to play at, I hope to give you a bellyful before I've done." "Seize that man, knock him over," said Broster; "you're surely not going to fight *him*, Penruddock, it's sheer madness; knock him over." "I tell you what it is," said Penruddock, turning savagely, "you shan't deprive me of the luxury of giving this fellow a sound hiding." Broster shrugged his shoulders, as if giving up the case. By this time the cry arose, "Black Jem's goin' to fight the gentleman;" and a wide enough ring was formed. Many who were prosecuting small combats of their own desisted, that they might behold the greater one. Broster stood beside John. "He's an ugly mass of strength," whispered he, "and will hug you like a bear; keep him well off, and remain cool for Heaven's sake." "Ready?" said John, stepping forward. "As a lark i' the mornin'," growled Jem, as he took up his ground. The men were very wary—Jem retreating round and round, John advancing. Now and then one or other darted out a blow, but it was generally stopped, and no harm done. At last the blows went home; the blood began to rise. The men drew closer,

and struck with greater rapidity. They are at it at last, hammer and tongs. No shirking or flinching now. Jem's blood was flowing. He was evidently getting severely punished. He couldn't last long at that rate. He fought desperately for a close, when a blinding blow full in the face brought him to the earth. He got up again like a madman, the whole bull-dog nature of him possessed and mastered by brutal rage. He cursed and struggled in the arms of his supporters to get at his enemy, but by main force they held him back till he recovered himself. "He'll be worked off in another round," I heard Broster whisper in my ear. Ah! here they come! I glanced at Pen for a moment as he stood with his eye on his foe. There was that in his face that boded no good. The features had hardened into iron somehow; the pitiless mouth was clenched, the eye cruel. A hitherto unknown part of his nature revealed itself to me as he stood there — perhaps unknown to himself. God help us, what strangers we are to ourselves! In every man's nature there is an interior unexplored as that of Africa, and over that region what wild beasts may roam! But they are at it again; Jem still

fights for a close, and every time his rush is stopped by a damaging blow. They are telling rapidly; his countenance, by no means charming at the best, is rapidly transforming. Look at that hideously gashed lip! But he has dodged Penruddock's left this time, and clutched him in his brawny arms. Now comes the tug of war, skill pitted against skill, strength against strength. They breathe for a little in each other's grip, as if summoning every energy. They are at it now, broad chest to chest. Now they seem motionless, but by the quiver of their frames you can guess the terrific strain going on. Now one has the better, now the other, as they twine round each other, lithe and supple as serpents. Penruddock yields! No! That's a bad dodge of Jem's. By Jove he loses his grip. All is over with him. Pen's brow grows dark; the veins start out on it; and the next moment Black Jem, the hero of fifty fights, slung over his shoulder, falls heavily to the ground.

At his fall a cheer rose from the dealers. "You blacksmith fellows had better make off," cried Broster; "your man has got the thrashing he deserves, and you can carry him home with you.

I am resolved to put a stop to these disturbances —there have been too many of late." The furnacemen hung for a moment irresolute, seemingly half-inclined to renew the combat, but a formidable array of cattle-dealers pressed forward and turned the scale. They decided on a retreat. Black Jem, who had now come to himself, was lifted up, and, supported by two men, retired toward the works and dwellings on the upper grounds, accompanied by his companions, who muttered many a surly oath and vow of future vengeance.

When we got back to the inn, Pen was very anxious about his face. He washed, and carefully perused his features in the little looking-glass. Luckily, with the exception of the upper lip slightly cut by Jim's first blow, no mark of the combat presented itself. At this happy result of his investigations he expressed great satisfaction —Broster laughing the meanwhile, and telling him that he was as careful of his face as a young lady.

The captain came down to see us off. The fair was over now, and the little streets were almost deserted. The dealers—apprehensive of another

descent from the furnaces—had hurried off as soon as their transactions could in any way permit. Groups of villagers, however, were standing about the doors discussing the event of the day; and when Penruddock appeared he became, for a quarter of an hour, an object of public interest for the first time in his life, and so far as he has yet lived for the last; an honour to which he did not seem to attach any particular value.

We shook hands with the captain; then, at a touch of the whip, the horse started at a gallant pace, scattering a brood of ducks in all directions; and in a few minutes Keady—with its white-washed houses and dark row of furnaces, tipped with tongues of flame, pale and shrunken yet in the lustre of the afternoon, but which would rush out wild and lurid when the evening fell—lay a rapidly dwindling speck behind.

I am induced to set down this business of the Irish market and market fight in order that the reader may gather some idea of the kind of man Penruddock was. He was not particularly witty, although on occasion he could say a good and neat thing enough; on no subject was he pro-

foundly read; I don't think that he ever attempted to turn a stanza, even when a boy and in love; he did not care for art; he was only conscious of a blind and obscure delight in music, and even for *that* the music had to be of the simplest kind—melody, not harmony. He had his limitations, you see: but as a man I have seldom met his equal. He was sagacious, kindly, affectionate, docile, patient, and unthinking of self. There was a peculiar deference in his ordinary manner, as if he were continually in the presence of a lady. Above all things, he was sincere, and you trusted Pen when you came to know him as implicitly as you would a law of nature. If you were out in a small boat in a storm with him; if you were ascending or descending a steep rocky hill-face with him, and got giddy on his hands; if you were in the heart of a snow-storm on the hills with him, when all traces of the road were lost, and the cold began to make thick your blood with the deadly pleasure of sleep—in such circumstances you found out what he was: cool, courageous, helpful; full of resource, with a quick brain, an iron nerve, a giant's strength. To the possessor of

such solid worth and manhood your merely brilliant talker, your epigrammatist, your sayer of smart things, is essentially a poor creature. What is wit?—a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. What is epigram? Penruddock did not paint pictures or write poems; it was his business "to make good sheep," as the Skye people say, and magnificent sheep he did make.

Pen had an ideal sheep in his mind, and to reach that ideal he was continually striving. At the yearly winnowings of his stock he selected his breeding ewes with the utmost care, and these ewes, without spot or blemish, he crossed with wonderfully-horned and far-brought rams, for which he sometimes paid enormous prices—so at least his neighbours said. His sheep he bred in Skye for the most 'part, and then he sent them over to Ulster to fatten. There, on pasture and turnips, they throve amazingly, all their good points coming into prominence, all their bad points stealing modestly into the shade. At markets, Penruddock's sheep always brought excellent prices, and his lot was certain to be about the best shown.

Pen and the Landlord had business relations. In

partnership, they brought over meal from Ireland, they speculated in turnips, they dealt in curious manures which were to the sour Skye soil what plum-pudding is to a charity boy: above all, he was confederate in a scheme of emigration which the Landlord had concocted, and was in the course of carrying out. Pen's visit at this time was purely a business one: he wished to see me, but that was far from his sole motive in coming—so he frankly said. But I did not care for that; I was quite able to bear the truth, and was glad to have him on any conditions.

A SMOKING PARLIAMENT.

ONE morning after our return, when breakfast was over, the Landlord, followed by Maida, carried the parrot into the sunshine in front of the house, and, sitting down on one of the iron seats, lighted a cheroot. As there was nothing on the cards on that special morning, we all followed him, and, lifting his cheroot-case, helped ourselves. The morning was warm and pleasant; and as no one had anything particular to say, we smoked in silence and were happy. The only one who was occupied was Fellowes. A newspaper had reached him by post the evening before, and with its pages he was now busy. Suddenly he burst out laughing, and read out from a half column of *facetiæ* how an Irishman was anxious to discover the opposite side of the street, and making inquiries at the passengers, was kept knocking about from one side of the thoroughfare to the other, like a ball in a racket-court. Pat was told that the opposite side

of the street was "over there;" and when he got "over there," to his sore bewilderment he discovered that the opposite side of the street, as if on purpose to torment him, had slipped anchor and flitted away to the side on which he had been making inquiries a few moments previously. We all laughed at Pat's intellectual perplexity; and shutting up the paper Fellowes maintained, in the light cynical vein so common at present, that the hunt after the opposite side of the street was no bad image of the hunt after truth. "Truth is always 'over there,'" he said; "and when you get 'over there,' running extreme peril from cab and dray in crossing, you find that it has gone back to the place from which you started. And so a man spends his life in chasing, and is as far on at the end of it as he was at the beginning. No man ever yet reached truth, or the opposite side of the street."

"What creatures those Irish are, to be sure!" said the Landlord, as he knocked a feather of white ash from the tip of his cheroot; "it would be a dull world without them. In India, a single Irishman at a station is enough to banish blue devils. The presence of an Irishman anywhere keeps

away low spirits, just as a cat in a house keeps away rats and mice. Every station should wear an Irishman, as an amulet against despondency."

"I have lived a good deal both in Ireland and the Highlands," said Pen, "and the intellectual differences between the two races have often struck me as not a little curious. They are of the same stock originally, antiquarians say; and yet Ireland is a land of Goshen, overflowing with the milk and honey of humour, whereas in every quality of humour the Highlands are as dry as the Sahara. Jokes don't usually come farther north than the Grampians. One or two are occasionally to be found in Ross-shire over there; but they are far from common, and their appearance is chronicled in the local prints just as the appearance of the capercailzie is chronicled. No joke has yet been found strong-winged enough to cross the Kyles. That's odd, is it not?"

"But have not the Highlanders wit?"

"Oh yes, plenty of it, but rather of the strenuous than of the playful kind; their wit is born for the most part of anger or contempt. 'There she goes,'

sneered the Englishman, as Duncan marched past in his tartans at a fair.' 'There she lies,' retorted Duncan, as he knocked the scorner over at a blow. 'Coming from Hell, Lauchlan,' quoth the shepherd, proceeding on a sacrament Sunday to the Free Church, and meeting his friend coming from the Church of the Establishment. 'Better than going to it, Rory,' retorted Lauchlan, as he passed on. Of that kind of rapid and sufficient retort, of the power of returning a blow swiftly and with interest, the Highlander is not in the least deficient. But he differs from the Irishman in this—that he has no eye for the pleasantly droll side of things; he has no fun in him, no sense of the genially comic. He laughs, but there is generally a touch of scorn in his laughter, and it is almost always directed against a man or a thing. The Irishman's humorous sense puts a stitch in the torn coat, ekes the scanty purse, boils the peas with which he is doomed to limp graveward. The bested Highlander can draw no amelioration of condition from such a source. The two races dine often scantily enough, but it is only the Irishman that can sweeten his potatoes with *point*. 'They talk of hardships,'

said the poor Irish soldier as he lay down to sleep on the deck of the transport—'They talk of hardships; but bedad this is the hardest ship I ever was in in my life.' No Highlander would have said *that*. 'And I believe that the joke made the hard plank all the softer to the joker."

"And how do you account for this difference?"

"I can't account for it. The two races springing from the same stock, I rather think it is *un*accountable; unless, indeed, it be traceable to climatic influence,—the soft, green, rainy Erin producing riant and ebullient natures; the bare, flinty Highlands, hard and austere ones. There is one quality, however, in which your Highlander can beat the world, with the exception, perhaps, of the North American Indian."

"What quality is that?"

"The quality of never exhibiting astonishment. The Highlander would as soon think of turning his back on his foe as of expressing astonishment at anything. Take a Highland lad from the wilds of Skye or Harris and drop him in Cheapside, and he will retain the most perfect equanimity. He will have no word of marvel for the crowds and the

vehicles; the Thames Tunnel will not move him; he will look on St Paul's without flinching. The boy may have only ridden in a peat-cart; but he takes a railway, the fields, hedges, bridges, and villages spinning past, the howling gloom of the tunnels, the speed that carries him in an hour over a greater extent of country than he ever beheld in his life even from his highest hill-top, as the merest matter of course, and unworthy of special remark."

"But the boy will be astonished all the same?"

"Of course he is. The very hair of his soul is standing on end with wonder and terror, but he will make no sign; he is too proud. Will he allow the Sassenach to triumph over him? If he did, he would not be his father's son. He will not admit that earth holds anything which he has not measured and weighed, and with which he is not perfectly familiar. When Chingachgook groans at the stake in the hearing of his tormentors, the Highlander will express surprise."

"This disinclination to express astonishment, if it does exist to the extent you say amongst the Highlanders, must arise from a solitary mode of living. People up in these Western Islands live on

the outskirts of existence, so to speak; and the knowledge that a big, bustling, important world exists beyond their horizon 'intensifies their individualism,' as the poet said the bracing air of old St Andrews intensified his. They are driven in on themselves; they are always standing in an attitude of mental self-defence; they become naturally self-contained and self-sustained."

"To some extent what you say is true; but the main reason of the Highlander's calmness and self-command in the presence of new and wonderful objects is pride. To express astonishment at the sight of an object implies previous ignorance of that object; and no Highlander worthy of the name will admit that he is ignorant of anything under the sun. To come back, however, to what we were speaking about a little while ago,—the differences between the Highlanders and the Irish—the light-hearted Irishman delights to 'chaff' and to be 'chaffed;' the intenser and more serious-hearted Highlander can neither do the one nor endure the other. The bit of badinage which an Irishman will laugh at and brush carelessly aside, stings the Highlander like a gadfly. When the

Highlander is fencing, the button is always coming off his foil, and the point is in your arm before you know where you are. If you enter into a gay wit-combat with a Highlander, it is almost certain to have a serious ending—just as the old Highland wedding-feasts, beginning with pledged healths and universal three-times-three, ended in a brawl and half-a-dozen men dirked."

"Chaff, in common with shoddy, the adulteration of food, and the tailor-sweating system, is the product of an over-ripe civilisation. It is the glimmer on the head of the dead cod-fish—putridity become phosphorescent. It can only thrive in large cities. It is the offspring of impudence and loquacity. I am not astonished that the Highlander cannot endure it; it is out of his way altogether. He no more can use it as a weapon of offence or defence than David could wear the armour of Saul. Chaff grows in the crowded street, not in the wilderness. It is the one thing we have brought into perfection in these later days. It is a weed that grows lustily, because it is manured with our vices and our decomposed faiths. I don't think the worse of the Highlander because he cannot chaff or endure

being chaffed. A London cabman would slang Socrates into silence in a quarter of an hour."

"I suppose," said the Landlord, "when the Skye railway is finished we poor Highlanders will get our jokes from the South, as we get our tea and sugar. It's a pity the Board of Directors did not mention that special import in their prospectus. The shares might have gone off more rapidly, Pen!"

"By the by," said Fellowes, turning to me, "you were speaking the other day of the curious distrust of Nature, which you consider the soul of all Celtic poetry and Celtic superstition, and you were inclined to attribute that distrust and fear to the austerities of climate and physical conformation, to the rain-cloud, and the precipice, the sea-foam, and the rock. I agree with you so far; but I think you lay too much stress on climatic influences and the haggardness of landscape. That quick sense of two powers—of Nature and Humanity, of man and a world outside of man—is the root of all poetry."

"Of course it is. To the Celt, Nature is malign, evil-disposed, cruel; and his poetry is dreary as

the strain of the night wind. To a Wordsworth, on the other hand, Nature is merciful and tranquil, deep-thoughted and calm; and as a consequence his poetry is temperate and humane, cool as a summer evening after the sun has set, and—with all reverence be it spoken—sometimes tiresomely hortatory."

"Preaching is generally dull work, I fear; and Nature's sermons, even when reported by Wordsworth, are as dull as some other sermons which I have heard and read."

"But what I was going to say was, that the sense of malevolence in Nature which you claim as the central fact of Celtic song and superstition, is not so much the result of harsh climates and wild environments as it is a stage in the mental progress of a race. At one stage of progress, all races fear Nature alike. The South-Sea Islander, whose bread-fruit falls into his mouth, fears Nature just as much as the Greenlander, who hunts the white bear on the iceberg and spears the walrus in the foam. When once man has got the upper hand of Nature, when he has made her his slave, when her winds sit in his sails and propel his ships, when she

yields him iron whereby she is more firmly bound to his service, when she gives him coal wherewith to cook food and to mitigate the rigours of her winters—when man has got that length, the aboriginal fear dies out of his heart, the weird Celtic bard goes, and Wordsworth comes. Even in the Lowlands, scraps of verses still exist—relics of long past time, and shuddering yet with an obsolete terror—which are as full of a sense of the malevolence of Nature as any Highland song or tune you could produce."

"Let me hear one or two."

"Well, here is one which has been occasionally quoted, and which you have in all likelihood come across in your reading :—

'Says Tweed to Till,
What gars ye rin sae still?
Says Till to Tweed,
Though ye rin wi' speed,
An' I rin slaw,
For ae man that ye droon,
I droon twa.'"

"Yes, it is very striking, and hits the nail on the head exactly. Sir Walter quotes it somewhere, I think. I have little doubt that these rhymes sug-

gested to Scott his Voices of the River in the 'Lay,' which is not that of the kelpie, a creature *in* the river, but of the river itself, in spiritual personation."

"That may be, or it may not. But nowhere, that I know of, does that sense of an evil will, and an alienation from man in nature, find a profounder and more tragic, if withal a playful, half-humorous expression than in this curious little Border fragment, unless, indeed, it be beaten by this from Forfarshire. Of the Dean stream, wherein, while it was yet golden time with me, I slew many a fine trout, there existed then a local rhyme of much less artistic and literary completion than that relating the colloquy between Till and Tweed, but, as I think, in its rudeness if anything even more gruesome and grim—

> 'The dowie Dean,
> It rins it lean,
> An' every seven year it gets ean.'"

"What a hideous *patois*," quoth the Landlord, "your Forfarshire people must talk! I can't say I understand a word of your rhymes. Perhaps you will be good enough to translate."

Fellowes laughed. "I'll do my best,—

> 'The dowie (quietly dismal) Dean,
> It rins it lean, (its lane, lone, solitary,)
> An' every seven year it gets ean, (ane, one.)'

There it is now, in Scotch and English, for you. What specially strikes me in this rhyme is its quiet power of awe, its reflex of the passionless calm, which, in scorn of contrast with the 'fever and fret' and flux of human feeling, is the specially frightful thing in Nature. No need for the Dean to trouble itself to employ kelpies: it runs quietly, gloomily on, feeding its fine red trout, and sure that by the serene law of the case when the hour comes the man will, and will drop to his moist doom, with no trouble given. 'It gets ean' when the said 'ean' is due; and never having been disappointed, it runs on 'dowie,' and not disturbing itself, as certain of its food in season. This it plainly reckons on, somewhat as year after year we look for strawberries and new potatoes. Then, the 'It rins *it lean*,' *by itself*, solitary, sullen, morose, as it were, and in the deeps of its moody pools, meditating periodical unsocial mischiefs, past and to come. For haggard, imaginative suggestion, unless it be in the 'Twa

Corbies,' I don't know where we can quite equal this. Beside this primal poetry of man's spiritual instinct of terror our later verse-developments are the merest nothings."

While I kept repeating over to myself the rude triplet which was new to me, and creeping as best I could into its fell significance, Pen said—

"And I suppose, in point of fact, that your gloomy hermit and murderer of a stream did get 'ean' every seven years. Don't you think only 'ean' in seven years a somewhat scant allowance? Most streams are as well supplied, I rather think."

"This septennial victim was in my boyhood considered by the natives as the toll exacted by, and fated due of the river; and I have heard the old people reckon back, over 'Jock Tamson that was drowned i' the year ——, coming hame fou frae the fair;' 'Wull Smith,' fou of course, also, who, fresh from 'the spring roup of grass parks at the Hatton in the year ——,' was unexpectedly treated to more water than he needed for his purposes of grog; and so on. The old inhabitant would then conclude with a grave—'It's weel kent the burn's nae

canny;' and a confident prediction, with half a shudder in his voice, that 'ye'll see it winna be lang noo till it maun get anither.' Any sceptic was at once silenced with—'Weel-a-weel—say yer say o't the noo, and jist bide till ye see. But dinna *ye* be daunerin' doon't yersel', neist nicht ye're fou, or maybe, my braw man, *ye'll no see.* I'm no saying but ye'll mak' a bonny corp, giff ye downa swall wi' the burn-water, yer stamack nae bein' used to't.'"

"Your theory is correct," said the Landlord, turning to Fellowes, "that the fear of Nature is common to all races, and that as each race advances in civilisation the terror dies out. The kelpie, for instance, always lives near a ford—bridge the stream, and the kelpie dies. Build a road across a haunted hill, and you banish the fairies of the hill for ever. The kelpie and the fairy are simply spiritual personations of very rude and common dangers—of being carried away by the current when you are attempting to cross a river—of being lost when you are taking a short cut across hills on which there is no track. Abolish the

dangers, and you at the same time abolish those creatures, Fear and Fancy."

"Rhymes like these are the truest antiques, the most precious articles of *virtu*. What is the brooch or ring that the fair woman wore, the brogues in which the shepherd travelled, the sword or shield with which the warrior fought, compared with a triplet like that, which is really an authentic bit of the terror that agitated human hearts long ago?"

But while we were discussing the Dean flowing on solitarily, every gurgle silenced with expectation as the hour drew near when its seven years' hunger would be appeased, Pen and the Landlord had drifted away to the subject of the Skye railway —this summer and the last a favourite subject of discussion in the Island.

"You are a great friend of the railway?"

"Of course I am," said the Landlord. "I consider the locomotive the good wizard of our modern day. Its whistle scares away filth, mendicancy, and unthrift; ignorance and laziness perish in the glare of its red eyes. I have seen what it has done for the Hindoo, and I know what it will do for the

Islesman. We hold India by our railways to-day rather than by our laws or our armies. The swart face of the stoker is the first sign of the golden age that has become visible in my time."

"What benefits do you expect the railway will bring with it to Skye?"

"It will bring us in closer contact with the South. By the aid of the railway we shall be enabled to send our stock to the southern markets more rapidly, more cheaply, and in better condition, and as a consequence we will obtain better prices. By aid of the railway the Islands will be opened up, our mineral treasures will be laid bare, our marbles will find a market, the Skye apple and the Skye strawberry will be known in Covent Garden, our fisheries will flourish as they have never flourished before. The railway will bring southern capital to us, and humane southern influences. The railway will send an electric shock through the entire Island. Everybody's pulse will be quickened; the turf-hut will disappear; and the Skyeman will no longer be considered a lazy creature: which he is not—he only seems so because he has never found a proper field for the display of his activities. There

are ten chances to one that your Skye lad, if left *in* Skye, will remain a fisherman or a shepherd; but transplant him to Glasgow, Liverpool, or London, and he not unfrequently blossoms into a merchant prince. There were quick and nimble brains under the shock heads of the lads you saw at my school the other day, and to each of these lads the railway will open a career great or small, or, at all events, the chance of one."

When the Landlord had ceased speaking, a boy brought the post-bag and laid it down on the gravel. It was opened, and we got our letters—the Landlord a number of Indian ones. These he put into his coat pocket. One he tore open and read. "Hillo, Pen!" he cried, when he got to the end, "my emigrants are to be at Skeabost on Thursday; we must go over to see them." Then he marched into the house, and in a little time thereafter our smoking parliament dissolved.

THE EMIGRANTS.

THE English emigrant is prosaic; Highland and Irish emigrants are poetical. How is this? The wild-rose lanes of England, one would think, are as bitter to part from, and as worthy to be remembered at the antipodes, as the wild coasts of Skye or the green hills of Ireland. Oddly enough, poet and painter turn a cold shoulder on the English emigrant, while they expend infinite pathos on the emigrants from Erin or the Highlands. The Highlander has his Lochaber-no-more, and the Irishman has the Countess of Gifford's pretty song. The ship in the offing, and the parting of Highland emigrants on the sea-shore, has been made the subject of innumerable paintings; and yet there is a sufficient reason for it all. Young man and maid are continually parting; but unless the young man and maid are lovers, the farewell-taking has no attraction for the singer or the artist. Without the laceration of love, without some

tumult of sorrowful emotion, a parting is the most prosaic thing in the world; with these it is perhaps the most affecting. "Good-bye" serves for the one; the most sorrowful words of the poet are hardly sufficient for the other. Rightly or wrongly, it is popularly understood that the English emigrant is not mightily moved by regret when he beholds the shores that gave him birth withdrawing themselves into the dimness of the far horizon,—although, if true, why it should be so? and if false, how it has crept into the common belief? are questions not easy to answer. If the Englishman is obtuse and indifferent in this respect, the Highlander is not. He has a cat-like love for locality. He finds it as difficult to part from the faces of the familiar hills as from the faces of his neighbours. In the land of his adoption he cherishes the language, the games, and the songs of his childhood; and he thinks with a continual sadness of the gray-green slopes of Lochaber, and the thousand leagues of dim, heart-breaking sea tossing between them and him.

The Celt clings to his birthplace, as the ivy nestles lovingly to its wall; the Saxon is like the arrowy seeds of the dandelion, that travel on the

wind and strike root afar. This simply means that the one race has a larger imagination than the other, and an intenser feeling of association. Emigration *is* more painful to the Highlander than it is to the Englishman—this poet and painter have instinctively felt—and in wandering up and down Skye you come in contact with this pain, either fresh or in reminiscence, not unfrequently. Although the member of his family be years removed, the Skyeman lives in him imaginatively—just as the man who has endured an operation is for ever conscious of the removed limb. And this horror of emigration—common to the entire Highlands—has been increased by the fact that it has not unfrequently been a forceful matter, that potent landlords have torn down houses and turned out the inhabitants, have authorised evictions, have deported the dwellers of entire glens. That the landlords so acting have not been without grounds of justification may in all probability be true. The deported villagers may have been cumberers of the ground, they may have been unable to pay rent, they may have been slowly but surely sinking into pauperism, their prospect of securing a

comfortable subsistence in the colonies may be considerable, while in their own glens it may be *nil*, —all this may be true; but to have your house unroofed before your eyes, and made to go on board a ship bound for Canada, even although the passage-money be paid for you, is not pleasant. An obscure sense of wrong is kindled in heart and brain. It is just possible that what is for the landlord's interest may be for yours also in the long run; but you feel that the landlord has looked after his own interest in the first place. He wished you away, and he has got you away; whether you will succeed in Canada is matter of dubiety. The human gorge rises at this kind of forceful banishment—more particularly the gorge of the banished!

When Thursday came, the Landlord drove us over to Skeabost, at which place, at noon, the emigrants were to assemble. He told me on the way that some of the more sterile portions of his property were over-populated, and that the people there could no more prosper than trees that have been too closely planted. He was consequently a great advocate of emigration. He main-

tained that force should never be used, but advice and persuasion only; that when consent was obtained, there should be held out a helping hand. It was his idea that if a man went all the way to Canada to oblige you, it was but fair that you should make his journey as pleasant as possible, and provide him employment, or, at all events, put him in the way of obtaining it when he got there. In Canada, consequently, he purchased lands, made these lands over to a resident relative, and to the charge of that relative, who had erected houses, and who had trees to fell, and fields to plough, and cattle to look after, he consigned his emigrants. He took care that they were safely placed on shipboard at Glasgow or Liverpool, and his relative was in waiting when they arrived. When the friendly face died on this side of the Atlantic, a new friendly face dawned on them on the other. With only one class of tenant was he inclined to be peremptory. He had no wish to disturb in their turf hut the old man and woman who had brought up a family; but when the grown-up son brought home a wife to the same hut, he was down upon them, like a severing knife, at once. The young

people could not remain there; they might go where they pleased; he would rather they would go to Canada than anywhere, but out of the old dwelling they must march. And the young people frequently jumped at the Landlord's offer—labour and good wages calling sweetly to them from across the sea. The Landlord had already sent out a troop of emigrants, of whose condition and prospects he had the most encouraging accounts, both from themselves and others, and the second troop were that day to meet him at Skeabost.

When we got to Skeabost there were the emigrants, to the number perhaps of fifty or sixty, seated on the lawn. They were dressed as was their wont on Sundays, when prepared for church. The men wore suits of blue or gray kelt, the women were wrapped for the most part in tartan plaids. They were decent, orderly, intelligent, and on the faces of most was a certain resolved look, as if they had carefully considered the matter, and had made up their minds to go through with it. They were of every variety of age too; the greater proportion young men who had long years of vigorous work in them, who would fell many a tree,

and reap many a field before their joints stiffened: women, fresh, comely, and strong, not yet mothers, but who would be grandmothers before their term of activity was past. In the party, too, was a sprinkling of middle-aged people, with whom the world had gone hardly, and who were hoping that Canada would prove kinder than Skye. They all rose and saluted the Landlord respectfully as we drove down toward the house. The porch was immediately made a hall of audience. The Landlord sat in a chair, Pen took his seat at the table, and opened a large scroll-book in which the names of the emigrants were inscribed. One by one the people came from the lawn to the porch and made known their requirements:—a man had not yet made up his passage-money, and required an advance; a woman desired a pair of blankets; an old man wished the Landlord to buy his cow, which was about to calve, and warranted an excellent milker. With each of these the Landlord talked sometimes in Gaelic, more frequently in English; entered into the circumstances of each, and commended, rebuked, expostulated, as occasion required. When an emigrant had finished his story, and made his

bargain with the Landlord, Pen wrote the conditions thereof against his or her name in the large scroll-book. The giving of audience began about noon, and it was evening before it was concluded. By that time every emigrant had been seen, talked with, and disposed of. For each the way to Canada was smoothed, and the terms set down by Pen in his scroll-book; and each, as he went away, was instructed to hold himself in readiness on the 15th of the following month, for on that day they were to depart.

When the emigrants were gone we smoked on the lawn, with the moon rising behind us. Next morning our party broke up. Fellowes and the Landlord went off in the mail to Inverness; the one to resume his legal reading there, the other to catch the train for London. Pen went to Bracadale, where he had some business to transact preparatory to going to Ireland, and I drove in to Portree to meet the southward-going steamer, for vacation was over, and my Summer in Skye had come to an end.

HOMEWARDS.

LIFE is pleasant, but unfortunately one has got to die; vacation is delightful, but unhappily vacations come to an end. Mine had come to an end; and sitting in the inn at Portree waiting for the southward-going steamer, I began to count up my practical and ideal gains, just as in dirty shillings and half-crowns a cobbler counts up his of a Saturday night.

In the first place, I was a gainer in health. When I came up here a month or two ago I was tired, jaded, ill at ease. I put spots in the sun, I flecked the loveliest blue of summer sky with bars of darkness. I felt the weight of the weary hours. Each morning called me as a slave-driver calls a slave. In sleep there was no refreshment, for in dream the weary day repeated itself yet more wearily. I was nervous, apprehensive of evil, irritable—ill, in fact. Now I had the appetite of an ostrich, I laughed at dyspepsia; I could have

regulated my watch by my pulse; and all the dusty, book-lettered, and be-cobwebbed chambers of my brain had been tidied and put to rights by the fairies Wonder, Admiration, Beauty, Freshness. Soul and body were braced alike—into them had gone something of the peace of the hills and the strength of the sea. I had work to do, and I was able to enjoy work. Here there was one gain, very palpable and appreciable. Then by my wanderings up and down, I had made solitude for ever less irksome, because I had covered the walls of my mind with a variety of new pictures. The poorest man may have a picture-gallery in his memory which he would not exchange for the Louvre. In the picture-gallery of my memory there hung Blaavin, the Cuchullins, Loch Coruisk, Dunsciach, Duntulm, Lord Macdonald's deer-forest, Glen Sligachan, and many another place and scene besides. Here was a gain quite as palpable and appreciable as the other. The pictures hung in the still room of memory, and to them I could turn for refreshment in dull or tedious hours; and carrying that still room with its pictures about with me wherever I went, I could enter and

amuse myself at any time—whether waiting at a station for a laggard train, or sitting under a dull preacher on a hot Sunday afternoon. Then, again, I had been brought in contact with peculiar individuals, which is in itself an intellectual stimulus, in so far as one is continually urged to enter into, explore, and understand them. What a new variety of insect is to an entomologist, that a new variety of man is to one curious in men, who delights to brood over them, to comprehend them, to distinguish the shades of difference that exist between them, and, if possible, sympathetically to *be* them. This sympathy enables a man in his lifetime to lead fifty lives. I don't think in the south I shall ever find the counterparts of John Kelly, Lachlan Roy, or Angus-with-the-dogs. I am certain I shall never encounter a nobler heart than that which has beat for so long a term in the frame of Mr M'Ian, nor a wiser or humaner brain than the Landlord's. Even to have met the tobacco-less man was something on which speculation could settle. Then, in the matter of gain, one may fairly count up the being brought into contact with songs, stories, and superstitions; for through means of these one obtains

access into the awe and terror that lay at the heart of that ancient Celtic life which is fast disappearing now. Old songs illustrate the spiritual moods of a people, just as old weapons, agricultural implements, furniture, and domestic dishes, illustrate the material conditions. I delighted to range through that spiritual antiquarian museum, and to take up and examine the bits of human love, and terror, and hate, that lay fossilised there. All these things were gains: and waiting at Portree for the steamer, and thinking over them all, I concluded that my Summer in Skye had not been misspent; and that no summer can be misspent anywhere, provided the wanderer brings with him a quick eye, an open ear, and a sympathetic spirit. It is the cunningest harper that draws the sweetest music from the harp-string; but no musician that ever played has exhausted all the capacities of his instrument—there is more to take for him who can take.

The *Clansman* reached Portree Bay at eleven P.M., and I went on board at once and went to bed. When I awoke next morning, the engines were in full action, and I could hear the rush of the

water past my berth. When I got on deck we were steaming down the Sound of Raasay; and when breakfast-time arrived, it needed but a glance to discover that autumn had come and that the sporting season was well-nigh over. A lot of sheep were penned up near the bows, amidships were piles of wool, groups of pointers and setters were scattered about, and at the breakfast-table were numerous sportsmen returning to the south, whose conversation ran on grouse-shooting, salmon-fishing, and deer-stalking. While breakfast was proceeding you saw everywhere sun-browned faces, heard cheery voices, and witnessed the staying of prodigious appetites. Before these stalwart fellows steaks, chops, platefuls of ham and eggs disappeared as if by magic. The breakfast party, too, consisted of all orders and degrees of men. There were drovers going to, or returning from markets; merchants from Stornoway going south; a couple of Hebridean clergymen, one of whom said grace; several military men of frank and hearty bearing; an extensive brewer; three members of Parliament, who had entirely recovered from the fatigues of legislation; and a tall and handsome English Earl of

some repute on the turf. Several ladies, too, dropped in before the meal was over. We were all hungry, and fed like Homer's heroes. The brewer was a valiant trencher-man, and the handsome Earl entombed cold pie to an extent unprecedented in my experience. The commissariat on board the Highland steamers is plentiful and of quality beyond suspicion; and the conjunction of good viands, and appetites whetted by the sea-breeze, results in a play of knife and fork perfectly wonderful to behold. When breakfast was over we all went up stairs; the smoking men resorted to the hurricane deck, the two clergymen read, the merchants from Stornoway wandered uneasily about as if seeking some one to whom they could attach themselves, and the drovers smoked short pipes amidships, and talked to the passengers there, and when their pipes were out went forward to examine the sheep. The morning and forenoon wore away pleasantly—the great ceremony of dinner was ahead, and drawing nearer every moment—that was something—and then there were frequent stoppages, and the villages on the shore, the coming and going of boats with cargo and passengers,

the throwing out of empty barrels here, the getting in of wool there, were incidents quite worthy of the regard of idle men leading for the time being a mere life of the senses. We stopped for a couple of hours in Broadford Bay—we stopped at Kyle-akin—we stopped at Balmacara; and the long looked-for dinner was served after we had past Kyle-Rhea, and were gliding down into Glenelg. For some little time previously savoury steams had assailed our nostrils. We saw the stewards descending into the cabin with covered dishes, and at the first sound of the bell the hurricane deck, crowded a moment before, was left entirely empty. The captain took his seat at the head of the table with a mighty roast before him, the clergyman said grace—somewhat lengthily, I fear, in the opinion of most—the covers were lifted away by deft waiters, and we dined that day at four as if we had not previously breakfasted at eight, and lunched at one. Dinner was somewhat protracted; for as we had nothing to do after the ladies went, we sat over cheese and wine, and then talk grew animated over whisky-punch. When I went on deck again we had passed Knock, and were

steaming straight for Armadale. The Knoydart hills were on the one side, the low shores of Sleat, patched here and there by strips of cultivation, on the other; and in a little we saw the larch plantations of Armadale, and the castle becoming visible through the trees on the lawn.

In autumn the voyage to the south is lengthened by stoppages, and frequently the steamer has to leave her direct course and thread long inland running lochs to take wool on board. These stoppages and wanderings out of the direct route would be annoying if you were hurrying south to be married, or if you were summoned to the deathbed of a friend from whom you had expectations; but as it is holiday with you, and as every divergence brings you into unexpected scenery, they are regarded rather as a pleasure than anything else. At Armadale we stayed for perhaps half an hour, and then struck directly across the Sound of Sleat, and sailed up the windings of Loch Nevis. When we reached the top there was an immense to do-on the beach; some three or four boats laden with wool were already pulling out towards the steamer, which immediately

lay to and let off noisy steam; men were tumbling bales of wool into the empty boats that lay at the stony pier, and to the pier laden carts were hurrying down from the farm-house that stood remote. The wool boats came on either side of the steamer; doors were opened in the bulwarks, to these doors steam cranes were wheeled, and with many a shock of crank and rattle of loosened chain, the bales were hoisted on deck and consigned to the gloomy recesses of the hold. As soon as a boat was emptied, a laden one pulled out to take its place; the steam cranes were kept continually jolting and rattling, and in the space of a couple of hours a considerable amount of business had been done. On the present occasion the transference of wool from the boats to the hold of the steamer occupied a longer time than was usual; sunset had come in crimson and died away to pale gold and rose, and still the laden boats came slowly on, still storms of Gaelic execration surged along the sides of the ship, and still the steam cranes were at their noisy work. The whole affair, having by this time lost all sense of novelty, was in danger of becoming tiresome, but in the fading light the steward had

lighted up the saloon into hospitable warmth and glow, and then the bell rang for tea. In a moment all interest in the wool boats had come to an end, the passengers hurried below, and before the tinklings of cup and saucer had ceased, the last bale of wool had been transferred from the boats alongside to the hold, and the *Clansman* had turned round, and was softly gliding down Loch Nevis.

A lovely, transparent autumn night arched above us, a young moon and single star by her side, when we reached Arisaig. By this time the ladies had retired, and those of the gentlemen who remained on deck were wrapped in plaids, each shadowy figure brought out more keenly by the red tip of a cigar. The entrance into Arisaig is difficult, and the *Clansman* was put on half steam. The gentlemen were requested to leave the hurricane-deck, and there the captain stationed himself, while a couple of men were sent to the bows, and three or four stationed at the wheel. Slowly the large vessel moved onward, with low black reefs of rocks on either side, like smears of dark colour, but perfectly soft and tender in outline; and every

here and there we could see the dark top of a rock peering out of the dim sea like a beaver's head. From these shadowy reefs, as the vessel moved on, the sea-birds were awaked from their slumbers, and strangely sweet, and liquid as flute-notes, were their cries and signals of alarm. Every now and again, too, with a sort of weary sigh, a big wave came heaving in, and broke over the dark reefs in cataracts of ghostly silver; and in the watery trouble and movement that followed, the moon became a well of moving light, and the star a quivering sword-blade. The captain stood alone on the hurricane deck, the passengers leaned against the bulwarks watching rock and sea, and listening to the call and re-call of disturbed mews, when suddenly there was a muffled shout from the outlook at the bows, the captain shouted "Port! port! *hard!*" and away went the wheel spinning, the stalwart fellows toiling at the spokes, and the ship slowly falling off. After a little while there was another noise at the bows, the captain shouted "Starboard!" and the wheel was rapidly reversed. We were now well up the difficult channel; and looking back we could see a perfect intricacy of

reefs and dim single rocks behind, and a fading belt of pallor wandering amongst them, which told the track of the ship—a dreadful place to be driven upon on a stormy night, when the whole coast would be like the mouth of a wounded boar—black tusks and churning foam. After a while, however, a low line of coast became visible, then a light broke upon it; and after a few impatient turns of the paddles we beheld a dozen boats approaching, with lights at their bows. These were the Arisaig boats, laden with cargo. At sight of them the captain left the hurricane deck, the anchor went away with a thundering chain, the passengers went to bed, and, between asleep and awake, I could hear half the night the trampling of feet, the sound of voices, and the jolt of the steam-cranes, as the Arisaig goods were being hoisted on deck and stowed away.

I was up early next morning. The sky was clear, the wind blowing on shore, and the bright, living, rejoicing sea came seething in on the rocky intricacies through which we slowly sailed. Skye was perfectly visible, the nearer shores dark and green; farther back the dim Cuchullins, standing in

the clouds. Eig rose opposite, with its curiously-shaped sciur; Muck lay ahead. The *Clansman* soon reached the open sea, and we began to feel the impulse of the Atlantic. By the time the passengers began to appear on deck the ship was lurching heavily along towards the far-stretching headland of Ardnamurchan. It was difficult to keep one's feet steady—more difficult to keep steady one's brain. Great glittering watery mounds came heaving on, to wash with unavailing foam the rocky coast; and amongst these the steamer rolled and tossed and groaned; its long dark pennon of smoke streaming with the impulse of the sea. The greater proportion of the passengers crawled amidships—beside the engines and the cook's quarters, which were redolent with the scent of herrings frying for a most unnecessary breakfast—for there the motion was least felt. To an unhappy landsman that morning the whole world seemed topsy-turvy. There was no straight line to be discovered anywhere; everything seemed to have changed places. Now you beheld the steersman against the sky on the crest of an airy acclivity, now one bulwark was buried in surge, now the other, and anon

the sheep at the bows were brought out against a foamy cataract. But with all this turmoil and dancing and rolling, the *Clansman* went swiftly on, and in due time we were off the Ardnamurchan lighthouse. Here we rolled and tossed in an unpleasant manner,—the smitten foam springing to the top of the rocks and falling back in snowy sheets,—and seemed to make but little progress. Gradually, however, the lighthouse began to draw slowly behind us, slowly we rounded the rocky buttress, slowly the dark shores of Mull drew out to sea, and in a quarter of an hour, with dripping decks and giddy brains, we had passed from the great bright heave and energy of the Atlantic to the quiet waters of Loch Sunart; and, sheltered by Mull, were steaming towards Tobermory.

The first appearance of Tobermory is prepossessing; but further acquaintance is if possible to be eschewed. As the *Clansman* steams into the bay, the little town, with its half circle of white houses, backed by hill terraces on which pretty villas are perched, and flanked by sombre pine plantations, is a pleasant picture, and takes heart and eye at once. As you approach, however, your

admiration is lessened, and when you go ashore quite obliterated. It has a "most ancient and fish-like smell," and all kinds of refuse float in the harbour. Old ocean is a scavenger at Tobermory, and is as dirty in his habits as Father Thames himself. The houses look pretty and clean when seen from the steamer's deck, but on a nearer view they deteriorate and become squalid, and several transform themselves into small inns, suggestive of the worst accommodation and the fiercest alcohol. The steamer is usually detained at Tobermory for a couple of hours, and during all that time there is a constant noise of lading and unlading. You become tired of the noise and tumult, and experience a sense of relief when steam is got up again, and with much backing and turning and churning of dirty harbour water into questionable foam, the large vessel works its way through the difficult channel, and slides calmly down the Sound of Mull.

Gliding down that magnificent Sound, the "Lord of the Isles" is in your memory, just as the "Lady of the Lake" is in your memory at Loch Katrine. The hours float past in music. All the scenes of

the noble poem rise in vision before you. You pass the entrance to the beautiful Loch Aline; you pass Ardtornish Castle on the Morven shore, where the Lords of the Isles held their rude parliaments and discussed ways and means; while opposite, Mull draws itself grandly back into lofty mountains. Further down you see Duart Castle, with the rock peering above the tide, on which Maclean exposed his wife—a daughter of Argyle's—to the throttling of the waves. After passing Duart, Mull trends away to the right, giving you a space of open sun-bright sea, while on the left the Linnhe Loch stretches toward Fort-William and Ben Nevis. Straight before you is the green Lismore—long a home of Highland learning—and passing it, while the autumn day is wearing towards afternoon, you reach Oban, sheltered from western waves by the island of Kerrera.

The longest delay during the passage is at Oban, but then we had dinner there, which helped to kill the time in a pleasant way. The *Clansman* had received a quantity of cargo at Tobermory, at Loch Aline a flock of sheep were driven on board, goods were taken in plentifully at other

places in the Sound at which we touched, and when we had received all the stuffs waiting for us at Oban, the vessel was heavily laden. The entire steerage deck was a bellowing and bleating mass of black cattle and sheep, each "parcel" divided from the other by temporary barriers. The space amidships was a chaos of barrels and trunks and bales of one kind or another, and amongst these the steerage passengers were forced to dispose themselves. Great piles of wooden boxes containing herring were laid along the cabin deck, so that if a man were disposed to walk about it behoved him to take care of his footsteps. But who cared! We were away from Oban now, the wind was light, the sun setting behind us, and the bell ringing for tea. It was the last meal we were to have together, and through some consciousness of this the ice of reserve seemed to melt, and the passengers to draw closer to each other. The Hebridean clergymen unbent; the handsome earl chatted to his neighbours as if his forehead had never known the golden clasp of the coronet; the sporting men stalked their stags over again; the members of Parliament discussed every subject

except the affairs of the nation; the rich brewer joked; the merchants from Stornoway laughed immoderately; while the cattle-dealers listened with awe. Tea was prolonged after this pleasant fashion, and then, while the Stornoway merchants and the cattle-dealers solaced themselves with a tumbler of punch, the majority of the other passengers went up stairs to the hurricane deck to smoke. What a boon is tobacco to the modern Englishman! It stands in place of wife, child, profession, and the interchange of ideas. With a pipe in your mouth indifference to your neighbour is no longer churlish, and silent rumination becomes the most excellent companionship. The English were never very great talkers, but since Sir Walter Raleigh introduced the Virginian weed they have talked less than ever. Smoking parliaments are always silent —and as in silence there is wisdom, they are perhaps more effective than the talking ones. Mr Carlyle admired those still smoke-wreathed Prussian assemblies of Frederick's, and I am astonished that he does not advocate the use of the weed in our English Witenagemote. Slowly the night fell around the smokers, the stars came out

in the soft sky, as the air grew chill, and one by one they went below. Then there was more toddy-drinking, some playing at chess, one or two attempts at letter-writing, and at eleven o'clock the waiters cleared the tables, and began to transform the saloon into a large sleeping apartment.

I climbed up to my berth and fell comfortably asleep. I must have been asleep for several hours, although of the lapse of time I was of course unconscious, when gradually the horror of nightmare fell upon me. This horror was vague and formless at first, but gradually it assumed a definite shape. I was Mazeppa, they had bound me on the back of the desert-born, and the mighty brute, maddened with pain and terror, was tearing along the wilderness, crashing through forests, plunging into streams, with the howling of wolves close behind and coming ever nearer. At last, when the animal cleared a ravine at a bound, I burst the bondage of my dream. For a moment I could not understand where I was. The sleeping apartment seemed to have fallen on one side, then it righted itself, but only to fall over on the other, then it made a wild

plunge forward as if it were a living thing and had received a lash. The ship was labouring heavily, I heard the voices of the sailors flying in the wind, I felt the shock of solid, and the swish of broken seas. In such circumstances sleep, for me at least, was impossible, so I slipped out of bed, and, steadying myself for a favourable moment, made a grab at my clothes. With much difficulty I dressed, with greater difficulty I got into my boots, and then I staggered on deck. Holding on by the first support, I was almost blinded by the glare of broken seas. From a high coast against which the great waves rushed came the steady glare of a lighthouse, and by that token I knew we were "on" the Mull of Cantyre. The ship was fuming through a mighty battle of tides. Shadowy figures of steerage passengers were to be seen clinging here and there. One—a young woman going to Glasgow as a housemaid, as she afterwards told me—was in great distress, was under the impression that we were all going to the bottom, and came to me for comfort. I quieted her as best I could, and procured her a seat. Once when the ship made a wild lurch, and a cloud of

spray came flying over the deck, she exclaimed to a sailor who was shuffling past wearing a sou'-wester and canvas overalls, "O sailor, is 't ever sae bad as this?" "As bad as this," said the worthy, poising himself on the unsteady deck, "as bad as this! Lod, ye sud jist a seen oor last vi'age. There was only three besides mysel o' the ship's crew able to haud on by a rape." Delivering himself of this scrap of dubious comfort, the sailor shuffled onward. Happily the turmoil was not of long duration. In an hour we had rounded the formidable Mull, had reached comparatively smooth water, and with the lights of Campbelton behind the pallid glare of furnaces seen afar on the Ayrshire coast, and the morning beginning to pencil softly the east, I went below again, and slept till we reached Greenock.

GLASGOW.

THE idea of Glasgow in the ordinary British mind is probably something like the following:—"Glasgow, believed by the natives to be the second city of the empire, is covered by a smoky canopy through which rain penetrates, but which is impervious to sunbeam. It is celebrated for every kind of industrial activity: it is fervent in business six days of the week, and spends the seventh in hearing sermon and drinking toddy. Its population consists of a great variety of classes. The 'operative,' quiet and orderly enough while plentifully supplied with provisions, becomes a Chartist when hungry, and extracts great satisfaction in listening to orators—mainly from the Emerald Isle—declaiming against a bloated aristocracy. The 'merchant prince,' known to all ends of the earth, and subject sometimes to strange vagaries; at one moment he is glittering away cheerily in the commercial heaven, the next he has disap-

peared, like the lost Pleiad, swallowed up of night for ever. The history of Glasgow may be summed up in one word—cotton ; its deity, gold ; its river, besung by poets, a sewer; its environs, dust and ashes; the *gamin* of its wynds and closes less tinctured by education than a Bosjesman; a creature that has never heard a lark sing save perhaps in a cage outside a window in the sixth story, where a consumptive seamstress is rehearsing the 'Song of the Shirt,' 'the swallows with their sunny backs' omitted." Now this idea of Glasgow is entirely wrong. It contains many cultivated men and women. It is the seat of an ancient university. Its cathedral is the noblest in Scotland; and its statue of Sir John Moore the finest statue in the empire. It is not in itself an ugly city, and it has many historical associations. Few cities are surrounded by prettier scenery ; and of late years it has produced two books—both authors dead now—one of which mirrors the old hospitable, social life of the place, while the other pleasantly sketches the interesting localities in its neighbourhood. Dr Strang, in his "Clubs of Glasgow," brings us in contact with the old jolly times ; and Mr Macdonald, in his "Rambles round

Glasgow," visits, stick in hand, every spot of interest to be found for miles around, knows every ruin and its legend, can tell where each unknown poet has lived and died, and has the martyrology of the district at his fingers' ends. So much for the books; and now a word or two concerning their authors.

Dr Strang was long chamberlain to the city of Glasgow; for more than half a century he saw it growing around him, increasing in population, wealth, and political importance, as during the same period no other British city had increased; and as he knew everything concerning that growth, he not unnaturally took in it the deepest pride. He could remember the old times, the old families, the old buildings, the old domestic habits; and when well-stricken in years, it pleased him to recall the matters which he remembered, and to contrast them with what he saw on every side. I think that on the whole he preferred the old Glasgow of his boyhood to the new Glasgow of his age. All his life he had a turn for literature; in his earlier day he had written stories and sketches, in which he mirrored as vividly as he could the older

aspects of the city; and as, along with this turn for writing, he had that antiquarian taste which has been a characteristic of almost every distinguished Scotsman since Sir Walter, while his years and his official position gave him opportunities of gratifying it, he knew Glasgow almost as well as the oldest inhabitant, who has been a bailie and cognisant of all secrets, knows his native village. He was an admirable *cicerone;* his mind was continually pacing up and down the local last century, knowing every person he met as he knew his contemporary acquaintances; and when he spoke of the progress of Glasgow, he spoke proudly, as if he were recounting the progress of his own son. During the last years of his life, it struck him that he might turn his local knowledge to account. The Doctor was a humorist; he was fond of anecdote, had a very proper regard for good eating and drinking; he remembered regretfully the rum-punch of his youth, and he was deeply versed in the histories of the Glasgow Clubs. In a happy hour, it occurred to him that if he told the story of those clubs—described the professors, the merchants, the magistrates, the local bigwigs, the

clergymen, the rakes, who composed their memberships—he would go to the very core and essence of old Glasgow Society; while in the course of his work he would find opportunities of using what antiquarian knowledge he had amassed concerning old houses, old social habits, the state of trade at different periods, and the like. The idea was a happy one; the Doctor set to work valiantly, and in course of time in a spacious volume, with suitable index and appendix, the "Clubs of Glasgow" was before the world. Never, perhaps, has so good a book been so badly written. The book is interesting, but interesting in virtue of the excellence of the material, not of the literary execution. Yet, on the whole, it may fairly be considered sufficient. You open its pages, and step from the Present into the Past. You are in the Trongate, through which Prince Charles has just ridden. You see Virginian merchants pacing to and fro with scarlet cloaks and gold-headed sticks; you see belle and beau walk a minuet in the Old Assembly-Room; you see flushed Tom and Jerry lock an asthmatic "Charlie" in his sentry-box, and roll him down a declivity into the river—all gone long

ago, like the rum-punch which they brewed, like the limes with which they flavoured it!

Mr Macdonald is Dr Strang's antithesis, and yet his complement. The one worked in antiquarianism and statistics; the other in antiquarianism and poetry. The one loved the old houses, the old hedges, the old churchyards within the city; the other loved these things without the city and miles away from it—and so between them both we have the district very fairly represented. Mr Macdonald was a man of genius, a song-writer, an antiquary, a devout lover of beast and bird, of snowdrop and lucken-gowan, of the sun setting on Bothwell Bank, of the moon shining down on Clydesdale barley fields. He was in his degree one of those poets who have, since Burns's time, made nearly every portion of Scotland vocal. Just as Tannahill has made Gleniffer hills greener by his songs, as Thom of Inverury has lent a new interest to the banks of the Dee, as Scott Riddell has added a note to the Border Minstrelsy, has Mr Macdonald taken poetic possession of the country around Glasgow. Neither for him nor for any of his compeers can the title of great poet be claimed.

These men are local poets; but if you know and love the locality, you thankfully accept the songs with which they have associated them. If the scenery of a shire is gentle, it is fitting that the poet of the shire should possess a genius to match. Great scenes demand great poems; simple scenes, simple ones. Coleridge's hymn in the Vale of Chamouni is a noble performance, but out of place if uttered in a Lanarkshire glen where sheep are feeding, and where you may search the horizon in vain for an elevation of five hundred feet. Mr Macdonald could not have approached Coleridge's hymn had he been placed in Chamouni; but he has done justice to the scenery that surrounded him—made the ivies of Crookston more sombre with his verse, and yet more splendid the westward-running Clyde in which the sun is setting.

He was one of those, too—of whom Scotchmen are specially proud—who, born in humble circumstances, and with no aid from college, and often but little from school, do achieve some positive literary result, and recognition more or less for the same. He was born in one of the eastern districts

of Glasgow, lived for some time in the Island of Mull, in the house of a relative—for, as his name imports, he was a pure Celt—and from his sires he drew song, melancholy, and superstition. The superstition he never could completely shake off. He could laugh at a ghost story, could deck it out with grotesque or humorous exaggeration; but the central terror glared upon him through all disguises, and, hearing or relating, his blood was running chill the while. Returning to his native city, he was entered an apprentice in a public manufactory, and here it was—fresh from ruined castle, mist folding on the Morven Hills, tales told by mountain shepherd or weather-beaten fisherman of corpse lights glimmering on the sea; with English literature in which to range and take delight in golden shreds of leisure; and with everything, past Highland experience and present dim environment, beginning to be overspread by the "purple light of love"—that Mr Macdonald became a poet. Considering the matter now, it may be said that his circumstances were not unfavourable to the development of the poetic spirit. Glasgow at the period spoken of could boast of her

poets. Dugald Moore was writing odes to "Earthquake" and "Eclipse," and getting quizzed by his companions. Motherwell, the author of "Jeanie Morrison," was editor of the *Courier*, and in its columns fighting manfully against Reform. Alexander Rodger, who disgusted Sir Walter by the publication of a wicked and witty welcome—singular in likeness and contrast to the Magician's own—on the occasion of the visit of his gracious Majesty George IV. to Edinburgh, was filling the newspapers of the west with satirical verses, and getting himself into trouble thereby. Nay, more, this same Alexander Rodger, either then or at a later period, held a post in the manufactory in which Mr Macdonald was apprentice. Nor was the eye without education, or memory without associations to feed upon. Before the door of this manufactory stood Glasgow Green, the tree yet putting forth its leaves under which Prince Charles stood when he reviewed his shoeless Highland host before marching to Falkirk. Near the window, and to be seen by the boy every time he lifted his head from work, flowed the Clyde, bringing recollections of the red ruins of Bothwell Castle, where

the Douglases dwelt, and the ivy-muffled walls of Blantyre Priory where the monks prayed; carrying imagination with it as it flowed seaward to Dumbarton Castle, with its Ossianic associations, and recalling, as it sank into ocean, the night when Bruce from his lair in Arran watched the beacon broadening on the Carrick shore. And from the same windows, looking across the stream, he could see the long straggling burgh of Rutherglen, with the church tower which saw the bargain struck with Menteith for the betrayal of Wallace, standing eminent above the trees. And when we know that the girl who was afterwards to become his wife was growing up there, known and loved at the time, one can fancy how often his eyes dwelt on the little town, with church tower and chimney, fretting the sky-line. And when he rambled—and he always *did* ramble—inevitably deeper impulses would come to him. Northward from Glasgow a few miles, at Rob Royston, where Wallace was betrayed, lived Walter Watson, whose songs have been sung by many who never heard his name. Seven miles southward from the city lay Paisley in its smoke, and beyond that, Gleniffer

Braes—scarcely changed since Tannahill walked over them on summer evenings. South-east stretched the sterile district of the Mearns, with plovers, and heather, and shallow, glittering lakes; and beyond, in a green crescent embracing the sea, lay a whole Ayrshire, fiery and full of Burns, every stock and stone passionate with him, his daisy blooming in every furrow, every stream as it ran seaward mourning for Highland Mary—and when night fell, in every tavern in the county the blithest lads in Christendie sitting over their cups, and flouting the horned moon hanging in the window pane. And then, to complete a poetic education, there was Glasgow herself—black river flowing between two glooms of masts—the Trongate's all-day roar of traffic, and at night the faces of the hurrying crowds brought out keenly for a moment in the light of the shop windows—the miles of stony streets, with statues in the squares and open spaces—the grand Cathedral, filled once with Popish shrines and rolling incense, on one side of the ravine, and on the other, John Knox on his pillar, impeaching it with outstretched arm that clasps a Bible. And

ever as the darkness came, the district north-east and south of the city was filled with shifting glare and gloom of furnace fires; instead of night and its privacy, the splendour of towering flame brought to the inhabitants of the eastern and southern streets a fluctuating scarlet day, piercing nook and cranny as searchingly as any sunlight—making a candle needless to the housewife as she darned stockings for the children, and turning to a perfect waste of charm, the blush on a sweetheart's cheek. With all these things around him, Mr Macdonald set himself sedulously to work, and whatever may be the value of his poetic wares, plenty of excellent material lay around him on every side.

To him all these things had their uses. He had an excellent literary digestion, capable of extracting nutriment from the toughest materials. He assiduously made acquaintance with English literature in the evenings, gradually taking possession of the British essayists, poets, and historians. During this period, too, he cherished republican feelings, and had his own speculations concerning the regeneration of the human race. At this time the

splendid promise of Chartism made glorious the horizon, and Macdonald, like so many of his class, conceived that the "five pints" were the *avant-couriers* of the millennium. For him, in a very little while, Chartism went out like a theatrical sun. He no longer entertained the idea that he could to any perceptible extent aid in the regeneration of the race. Indeed, it is doubtful whether, in his latter days, he cared much whether the race would ever be regenerated. Man was a rascal, had ever been a rascal, and a rascal he would remain till the end of the chapter. He was willing to let the world wag, certified that the needful thing was to give regard to his own private footsteps. His own personal hurt made him forget the pained world. He was now fairly embarked on the poetic tide. His name, appended to copies of verses, frequently appeared in the local prints, and gained no small amount of local notice. At intervals some song-bird of his brain of stronger pinion or gayer plumage than usual would flit from newspaper to newspaper across the country; nay, several actually appeared beyond the Atlantic, and, not unnoticed by admiring eyes, perched on a

broadsheet here and there, as they made their way from the great cities towards the Western clearings. All this time, too, he was an enthusiastic botanist in book and field, a lover of the open country and the blowing wind, a scorner of fatigue, ready any Saturday afternoon when work was over for a walk of twenty miles, if so be he might look on a rare flower or an ivied ruin. And the girl living over in Rutherglen was growing up to womanhood, each charm of mind and feature celebrated for many a year in glowing verse; and her he, poet-like, married—the household plenishing of the pair, love and hope, and a disregard of inconveniences arising from straitened means. The happiest man in the world—but a widower before the year was out! With his wife died many things, all buried in one grave. Republican dreamings and schemes for the regeneration of the world faded after that. Here is a short poem, full of the rain cloud and the yellow leaf, which has reference to his feelings at the time—

"Gorgeous are thy woods, October!
Clad in glowing mantles sear;
Brightest tints of beauty blending
Like the west, when day 's descending,
Thou 'rt the sunset of the year.

" Fading flowers are thine, October!
Droopeth sad the sweet blue-bell;
Gone the blossoms April cherish'd —
Violet, lily, rose, all perish'd—
Fragrance fled from field and dell.

" Songless are thy woods, October!
Save when redbreast's mournful lay
Through the calm gray morn is swelling,
To the list'ning echoes telling
Tales of darkness and decay.

" Saddest sounds are thine, October!
Music of the falling leaf
O'er the pensive spirit stealing,
To its inmost depths revealing:
'Thus all gladness sinks in grief.'

" I do love thee, drear October!
More than budding, blooming Spring—
Hers is hope, delusive smiling,
Trusting hearts to grief beguiling;
Mem'ry loves thy dusky wing.

" Joyous hearts may love the summer,
Bright with sunshine, song, and flower;
But the heart whose hopes are blighted,
In the gloom of woe benighted,
Better loves thy kindred bower.

" 'Twas in thee, thou sad October!
Death laid low my bosom flower.
Life hath been a wintry river,
O'er whose ripple gladness never
Gleameth brightly since that hour.

"Hearts would fain be with their treasure,
Mine is slumb'ring in the clay;
Wandering here alone, uncheery,
Deem 't not strange this heart should weary
For its own October day."

The greater proportion of Mr Macdonald's poems first saw the light in the columns of the *Glasgow Citizen*, then, as now, conducted by Mr James Hedderwick, an accomplished journalist, and a poet of no mean order. The casual connexion of contributor and editor ripened into friendship, and in 1849, Mr Macdonald was permanently engaged as Mr Hedderwick's sub-editor. He was now occupied in congenial tasks, and a gush of song followed this accession of leisure and opportunity. Sunshine and the scent of flowers seemed to have stolen into the weekly columns. You "smelt the meadow" in casual paragraph and in leading article. The *Citizen* not only kept its eye on Louis Napoleon and the Czar, it paid attention to the building of the hedge-sparrow's nest, and the blowing of the wild flower as well.

Still more to prose than to verse did Mr Macdonald at this time direct his energies; and he was happy enough to encounter a subject exactly suited

to his powers and mental peculiarities. He was the most uncosmopolitan of mortals. He had the strongest local attachments. In his eyes, Scotland was the fairest portion of the planet; Glasgow, the fairest portion of Scotland; and Bridgeton—the district of the city in which he dwelt—the fairest portion of Glasgow. He would have shrieked like a mandrake at uprootal. He never would pass a night away from home. But he loved nature—and the snowdrop called him out of the smoke to Castle Milk, the lucken-gowan to Kenmure, the craw-flower to Gleniffer. His heart clung to every ruin in the neighbourhood like the ivy. He was learned in epitaphs, and spent many an hour in village churchyards in extracting sweet and bitter thoughts from the half-obliterated inscriptions. Jaques, Isaak Walton, and Old Mortality, in one, he knew Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, and Ayrshire by heart. Keenly sensible to natural beauty, full of antiquarian knowledge, and in possession of a prose style singularly quaint, picturesque, and humorous, he began week, by week, in the columns of the *Citizen*, the publication of his "Rambles Round Glasgow." City people were astonished to learn that

the country beyond the smoke was far from prosaic —that it had its traditions, its antiquities, its historical associations, its glens and waterfalls worthy of special excursions. These sketches were afterwards collected, and ran, in their separate and more convenient form, through two editions. No sooner were the "Rambles" completed than he projected a new series of sketches, entitled, "Days at the Coast" —sketches which also appeared in the columns of a weekly newspaper. Mr Macdonald's best writing is to be found in this book—several of the descriptive passages being really notable in their way. As we read, the Firth of Clyde glitters before us, with white villages sitting on the green shores: Bute and the twin Cumbraes are asleep in sunshine; while beyond, a stream of lustrous vapour is melting on the grisly Arran peaks. The publication of these sketches raised the reputation of their author, and, like the others, they received the honour of collection, and a separate issue. But little more has to be said concerning his literary activity. The early afternoon was setting in. During the last eighteen months of his life he was engaged on one of the Glasgow morning journals;

and when in its columns he rambled as of yore, it was with a comparatively infirm step, and an eye that had lost its interest and lustre. "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her;" and when the spring-time came, Macdonald, remembering all her former sweetness, journeyed to Castle Milk to see the snowdrops—for there, of all their haunts in the west, they come earliest and linger latest. It was a dying visit, an eternal farewell. Why have I written of this man so? Because he had the knack of making friends of all with whom he came into contact, and it was my fortune to come into more frequent and more intimate contact with him than most. He was neither a great man nor a great poet—in the ordinary senses of these terms—but since his removal there are perhaps some half-dozen persons in the world who feel that the "strange superfluous glory of the air" lacks something, and that because an eye and an ear are gone, the colour of the flower is duller, the song of the bird less sweet, than in a time they can remember.

Both Dr Strang and Mr Macdonald have written about Glasgow, and by their aid we shall be able

to see something of the city and its surroundings.

The history of the city, from the period of St Mungo to the commercial crisis in 1857 and the fall of the Western Bank, presents many points of interest. Looking back some thirteen centuries into the gray morning-light of time, we see St Mungo led by an angel, establishing himself on the banks of the Molendinar, and erecting a rude chapel or oratory. There for many summers and winters he prayed his prayers, sung his *aves*, and wrought his miracles. The fame of his sanctity spread far and wide, and many pilgrims came to converse with, and be counselled by, the holy man. In process of time—the prayers of the saint proving wondrously efficacious, and the Clyde flowing through the lower grounds at a little distance being populous with salmon—people began to gather, and a score or so of wooden huts, built on the river bank, was the beginning of the present city. In 1197 the cathedral was consecrated by a certain Bishop Jocelyn, and from thence, on to the Reformation, its affairs continued in a prosperous condition ; its revenues, taking into consideration the poverty of

the country and the thinness of the population, were considerable; and its bishops were frequently men of ambition and of splendid tastes. Its interior was enriched by many precious relics. On days of high festival, the Lord Bishop and his officials, clad in costly vestments, entered by the great western door, and as the procession swept onward to the altar, incense fumed from swinging censers, the voices of the choir rose in rich and solemn chanting, the great organ burst on the ear with its multitudinous thunders, and rude human hearts were bowed to the ground with contrition, or rose in surges of sound to heaven in ecstasy. Glasgow, too, is closely connected with Wallace. The Bell o' the Brae saw the flash of his sword as the Southrons fled before him. At the kirk of Rutherglen, Sir John Menteith and Sir Aymer de Vallance met to plan the capture of the hero: and at Rob Royston the deed of shame was consummated. Menteith, with sixty followers, surrounded the house in which Wallace slept. Traitors were already within. His weapons were stolen. Kierly, his servant, was slain. According to Blind Harry, at the touch of a hand Wallace sprung up—a lion

at bay. He seized an oaken stool—the only weapon of offence within reach—and at a blow broke one rascal's back, in a second splashed the wall with the blood and brains of another, when the whole pack threw themselves upon him, bore him down by sheer weight, and secured him. He was conveyed to Dumbarton, then held by the English, and from thence was delivered into the hands of Edward. The battle of Langside was fought in the vicinity of the city. Moray, lying in Glasgow, intercepted Mary on her march from Hamilton to Dumbarton, and gave battle. Every one knows the issue. For sixty miles without drawing rein the queen fled towards England and a scaffold. Moray returned to Glasgow through the village of Gorbal's, his troopers, it is said, wiping their bloody swords on the manes of their horses as they rode, and went thence to meet his assassin in Linlithgow town. During the heat and frenzy of the Reformation, nearly all our ecclesiastical edifices went to the ground, or came out of the fierce trial with interiors pillaged, altars desecrated, and the statues of apostles and saints broken or defaced. Glasgow Cathedral was assailed like the

rest; already the work of destruction had begun, when the craftsmen of the city came to the rescue. Their exertions on that occasion preserved the noble building for us. They were proud of it then; they are proud of it to-day. During the persecution, the country to the west of Glasgow was overrun by dragoons, and many a simple Covenanter had but short shrift—seized, tried, condemned, shot, in heaven, within the hour. The rambler is certain to encounter, not only in village churchyards, but by the wayside, or in the hearts of solitary moors, familiar but with the sunbeam and the cry of the curlew, rude martyr stones' their sculptures and letters covered with lichen, and telling with difficulty the names of the sufferers and the manner of their deaths, and intimating that—

> "This stone shall witness be
> 'Twixt Presbyterie and Prelacie."

The next striking event in the history of the city is the visit of Prince Charles. Enter on the Christmas week of 1745-46 the wild, foot-sore, Highland host on its flight from Derby. How the sleek citizens shrink back from the worn, hairy faces, and

fierce eyes in which the lights of plunder burn. "The Prince, the Prince! which is the Prince?" "That's he—yonder—wi' the lang yellow hair." Onward rides, pale and dejected, the throne-haunted man. He looks up as he catches a fair face at a window, and you see he inherits the Stuart smile and the Stuart eye. He, like his fathers, will provoke the bitterest hatred, and be served by the wildest devotion. Men will gladly throw away their lives for him. The blood of nobles will redden scaffolds for him. Shepherds and herdsmen will dare death to shelter him; and beautiful women will bend over his sleep—wrapped in clansman's plaid on bed of heather or bracken—to clip but one shred of his yellow hair, and feel thereby requited for all that they and theirs have suffered in his behalf. But with all his beauty and his misfortunes, his appearance in Glasgow created little enthusiasm. He scarcely gained a recruit. Only a few ladies donned in his honour white breast-knots and ribbons. He levied a heavy contribution on the inhabitants. A prince at the head of an army in want of brogues, and who insisted on being provided with shoe-leather *gratis*, was hardly calculated

to excite the admiration of prudent Glasgow burgesses. He did not remain long. The Green beheld for one day the far-stretching files and splendour of the Highland war, on the next—in unpaid shoe-leather—he marched to his doom. Victory, like a stormy sunbeam, burned for a moment on his arms at Falkirk, and then all was closed in blood and thunder on Culloden Moor.

It is about this period that Dr Strang's book on the "Clubs" begins. In those old, hospitable, hard-drinking days, Glasgow seems to have been pre-eminently a city of clubs. Every street had its tavern, and every tavern had its club. There were morning clubs, noon-day clubs, evening clubs, and all-day clubs, which, like the sacred fire, never went out. The club was a sanctuary wherein nestled friendship and enjoyment. The member left his ordinary life outside the door, like his great-coat, and put it on again when he went away. Within the genial circle of the club were redressed all the ills that flesh is heir to: the lover forgot Nerissa's disdain, the debtor felt no longer his creditor's eye. At the sight of the boon companions, Care packed up his bundles and decamped, or if he

dared remain, he was immediately laid hold off, plunged into the punch-bowl, and there was an end of him for that night at least. Unhappily those clubs are dead, but as their ghosts troop past in Dr Strang's pages, the sense is delicately taken by an odour of rum-punch. Shortly after the Pretender's visit to the city, the Anderston Club—so called from its meetings being held in that little village—flourished, drank its punch, and cracked its jokes on Saturday afternoons. Perhaps no club connected with the city, before or since, could boast of a membership so distinguished. It comprised nearly all the University professors. Dr Moore, professor of Greek; Professor Ross, who faithfully instilled the knowledge of Humanities into the Glasgow youth; Drs Cullen and Hamilton, medical teachers of eminence; Adam Smith; the Brothers Foulis—under whose auspices the first Fine-Art Academy was established in Scotland, and from whose printing-press the Greek and Roman classics were issued with a correctness of text and beauty of typography which had then no parallel in the kingdom—were regular and zealous members. But the heart and soul

of the Anderston Club seems to have been Dr Simson, professor of mathematics. His heart vibrated to the little hostelry of Anderston as the needle vibrates to the pole. He could have found his way with his eyes shut. The following story, related of the professor by Dr Strang, is not unamusing in itself, and a fair specimen of the piebald style in which the greater portion of the book is written :—

"The mathematician ever made it a rule to throw algebra and arithmetic 'to the dogs,' save in so far as to discover the just *quadratic equation* and *simple division* of a bowl of punch. One thing alone in the club he brought his mathematics to bear upon, and that was his glass. This had been constructed on the truest principles of geometry for emptying itself easily, the stalk requiring to form but a very acute angle with the open lips ere its whole contents had dropped into the æsophagus. One fatal day, however, Girzy, the black-eyed and dimple-cheeked servant of the hostelry, in making arrangements for the meeting of the club, allowed this favourite piece of crystal, as many black and blue eyed girls have done be-

fore and since, to slip from her fingers and be broken. She knew the professor's partiality for his favourite beaker, and thought of getting another; but the day was too far spent, and the Gallowgate, then the receptacle of such luxuries, was too far distant to procure one for that day's meeting of the fraternity. Had Verreville, the city of glass, been then where it has since stood, the mathematician's placid temper might not have been ruffled, nor might Girzy have found herself in so disagreeable a dilemma. The club met, the hen-broth smoked in every platter, the few standard dishes disappeared, the *medoc* was sipped, and was then succeeded, as usual, by a goodly-sized punch-bowl. The enticing and delicious compound was mixed, tasted, and pronounced nectar: the professor, dreaming for a moment of some logarithm of Napier's, or problem of Euclid's, pushed forward to the fount unconsciously the glass which stood before him, drew it back a brimmer, and carried it to his lips; but lo! the increased angle at which the professor was obliged to raise his arm, roused him from his momentary reverie, and, pulling the drinking-cup from his lips as if it contained the deadliest

henbane, exclaimed, 'What is this, Girzy, you have given me? I cannot drink out of this glass. Give me my own, you little minx. You might now well know that *this* is not mine.' 'Weel-a-wat, it's a I hae for't, Maister Simson,' answered Girzy, blushing. 'Hush, hush,' rejoined the mathematician, 'say not so. I know it is not *my* glass, for the outer edge of this touches my nose, and *mine* never did so.' The girl confessed the accident, and the professor, though for some minutes sadly out of humour, was at length appeased, and swallowed his *sherbet* at the risk of injuring his proboscis."

Dr Strang informs us that the eccentric mathematician, in his progress from the University to Anderston, was in the habit of counting his steps, and that, walking blind-folded, he could have told the distance to a fraction of an inch. He has omitted, however, to tell us whether the Doctor's steps were counted on his return, and if the numbers corresponded!

Along with the notices of the clubs subsequent to the one mentioned, Dr Strang gives his reader a tolerable notion of how it went with Glasgow in

those years. We have a peep of the Trongate during the lucrative tobacco trade, when Glasgow had her head not a little turned by her commercial prosperity. There are rich citizens now in the streets. Behold Mr Glassford, picking his steps daintily along the Crown o' the Causeway, with scarlet cloak, flowing wig, cocked-hat, and gold-headed cane! He has money in his purse, and he knows it too. All men warm themselves in the light of his countenance. If he kicks you, you are honoured, for is it not with a golden foot? How the loud voice droops, how the obsequious knee bends before him! He told Tobias Smollett yesterday that he had five-and-twenty ships sailing for him on the sea, and that half-a-million passed through his hands every year. Pass on a little farther, and yonder is Captain Paton sunning himself on the ample pavement in front of the Tontine. Let us step up to him. He will ask us to dinner, and mix us a bowl of punch flavoured with his own limes—

"In Trinidad that grow."

For hospitality was then, as now, a characteristic

of the city. The suppers—the favourite meal—were of the most substantial description. A couple of turkeys, a huge round of beef, and a bowl—a very Caspian Sea—of punch, seething to its silver brim, and dashed with delicate slices of lime or lemon—formed the principal ingredients. Good fellowship was the order of the day. In the morning and forenoon the merchants congregated in the Tontine reading-room for news and gossip, and at night the punch-bowl was produced, emptied, replenished, and emptied again, while the toasts—"Down with the Convention," "The Pilot that weathered the storm"—were drunk with enthusiasm in some cosy tavern in the then aristocratic Princes Street. At a later period, during the disturbed years that preceded the Reform Bill, we see the moneyed classes—"soor-milk jockeys" they were profanely nicknamed by the mob—eagerly enrolling themselves in yeomanry corps: on field days resplendent in laced jacket and shako, or clanking through the streets with spur and sabre. As we approach our own times the clubs pale their ineffectual fires—they shrink from planets to will-o'-the-wisp; at last

"They die away
And fade into the light of common day."

Glasgow is now, so far as history is concerned, a clubless city.

During the commercial distress of 1848-49, and the agitation consequent on the flight of Louis Philippe and the establishment of the French Republic, Glasgow had the bad eminence of going further in deeds of lawlessness and riot than any other city in the empire. The "Glasgow operative" is, while trade is good and wages high, the quietest and most inoffensive of creatures. He cares comparatively little for the affairs of the nation. He is industrious and contented. Each six months he holds a saturnalia—one on New-year's day, the other at the Fair, (occurring in July,) and his excesses at these points keep him poor during the intervals. During periods of commercial depression, however, when wages are low, and he works three-quarter time, he has a fine nose to scent political iniquities. He begins to suspect that all is not right with the British constitution. These unhappy times, too, produce impudent demagogues, whose power of lungs and floods of

flashy rhetoric work incredible mischief. To these he seriously inclines his ear. He is hungry and excited. He is more anxious to reform Parliament than to reform himself. He cries out against tyranny of class-legislation, forgetting the far harder tyranny of the gin-palace and the pawn-shop. He thinks there should be a division of property. Nay, it is known that some have in times like these marked out the very houses they are to possess when the goods of the world are segregated and appropriated anew. What a dark sea of ignorance and blind wrath is ever weltering beneath the fair fabric of English prosperity! This dangerous state of feeling had been reached in the year spoken of. Hungry, tumultuous meetings were held on the Green. The ignorant people were maddened by the harangues of orators—fellows who were willing to burn the house of the nation about the ears of all of us, if so be *their* private pig could be roasted thereby. "The rich have food," said they, "you have none. You cannot die of hunger. Take food by the strong hand wherever you can get it." This advice was acted upon. The black human sea poured along London Street, and

then split—one wave rushed up the High Street, another along the Trongate—each wasting as it went. The present writer, then a mere lad, was in the streets at the time. The whole thing going on before his eyes seemed strange, incredible, too monstrous to be real—a hideous dream which he fought with and strove to thrust away. For an hour or so all order was lost. All that had been gained by a thousand years of strife and effort—all that had been wrested from nature—all the civilities and amenities of life—seemed drowned in a wild sea of scoundrelism. The world was turned topsy-turvy. Impossibility became matter of fact. Madness ruled the hour. Gun-shops were broken open, and wretched-looking men, who hardly knew the muzzle from the stock, were running about with muskets over their shoulders. In Buchanan Street a meal cart was stopped, overturned, the sacks ripped open with knives, and women were seen hurrying home to their famishing broods with aprons full; some of the more greedy with a cheese under each arm. In Queen Street a pastry cook's was attacked, the windows broken, and the delicacies they contained greedily devoured. A large

glass-case, filled with coloured lozenges, arranged in diamond patterns, stood serene for a while amid universal ruin. A scoundrel smashed it with a stick; down rushed a deluge of lozenges, and a dozen rioters were immediately sprawling over each other on the ground to secure a share of the spoil. By this time alarm had spread. Shops were shutting in all directions, some of the more ingenious traders, it is said, pasting "A Shop to Let" upon their premises—that they might thereby escape the rage or the cupidity of the rioters. At last, weary with spoliation, the mob, armed with guns, pistols, and what other weapons they had secured, came marching along the Trongate, a tall begrimed collier, with a rifle over his shoulder, in front. This worthy, more than two-thirds drunk, kept shouting at intervals, "Vive la Republic! We'll hae Vive la Republic, an' naething *but* Vive la Republic!" to which intelligible political principle his followers responded with vociferous cheers. At last they reached the Cross. Here a barricade was in process of erection. Carts were stopped and thrown down, and London Street behind was crowded with men, many of them pro-

vided with muskets. On a sudden the cry arose, "The sogers, the sogers!" terrible to the heart of a British mob. Hoofs were heard clattering along the Trongate, and the next moment an officer of Carabineers leaped his horse over the barricade, followed by his men, perhaps a dozen in all. The effect was instantaneous. In five minutes not a rioter was to be seen. When evening fell the Trongate wore an unwonted appearance. Troops stacked their bayonets, lighted their fires, and bivouacked under the piazzas of the Tontine. Sentinels paced up and down the pavements, and dragoons patrolled the streets. Next day the disturbance came to a crisis. A riot occurred in Calton or Bridgeton. The pensioners were sent to quell it there. While marching down one of the principal streets, they were assailed by volleys of stones, the crowd meanwhile falling back sullenly from the bayonet points. The order was given to fire, and the veterans, whose patience was completely exhausted, sent their shot right into the mass of people. Several were wounded, and one or more killed. When the pensioners were gone, a corpse was placed on boards, carried through the

streets shoulder-high by persons who, by that means, hoped to madden and rouse the citizens; a large crowd attending, every window crammed with heads as the ghastly procession passed. As they approached the centre of the city, a file of soldiers was drawn across the street up which they were marching. When the crowd fell back, the bearers of the dead were confronted by the ominous glitter of steel. The procession paused, stopped, wavered, and finally beat a retreat, and thus the riots closed. That evening people went to look at the spot where the unhappy collision had taken place. Groups of workmen were standing about, talking in tones of excitement. The wall of one of the houses was chipped in places by bullets, and the gutter, into which a man had reeled, smashed by the death-shot, had yet a ruddy stain. Next day tranquillity was in a great measure restored. Masses of special constables had by this time been organised, and marched through the city in force. Although they did not come into contact with the rioters, the bravery they displayed in cudgelling what unfortunate females, and *keelies* of tender years fell into their hands, gave one a lively

idea of the prowess they would have exhibited had they met foes worthy of the batons they bore.

Glasgow, as most British readers are aware, is situated on both sides of the Clyde, some twenty or thirty miles above its junction with the sea. Its rapidity of growth is perhaps without a parallel in the kingdom. There are persons yet alive who remember when the river, now laden with shipping, was an angler's stream, in whose gravelly pools the trout played, and up whose rapids the salmon from the sea flashed like a sunbeam; and when the banks, now lined with warehouses and covered with merchandise of every description, really merited the name of the Broomy Law. Science and industry have worked wonders here. The stream, which a century ago hardly allowed the passage of a herring-boat or a coal-gabbert, bears on its bosom to-day ships from every clime, and mighty ocean steamers which have wrestled with the hurricanes of the Atlantic. Before reaching Glasgow the Clyde traverses one of the richest portions of Scotland, for in summer Clydesdale is one continued orchard. As you come down the

stream towards the city, you have, away to the right, the mineral districts of Gartsherrie and Monkland — not superficially captivating regions. Everything there is grimed with coal-dust. Spring herself comes with a sooty face. The soil seems calcined. You cannot see that part of the world to advantage by day. With the night these innumerable furnaces and iron-works will rush out into vaster volume and wilder colour, and for miles the country will be illuminated—restless with mighty lights and shades. It is the Scottish Staffordshire. On the other hand, away to the south-west stretch the dark and sterile moors of the covenant, with wild moss-haggs, treacherous marshes green as emerald, and dark mossy lochs, on whose margins the water-hen breeds—a land of plovers and curlews, in whose recesses, and in the heart of whose mists, the hunted people lay while the men of blood were hovering near—life and death depending on the cry and flutter of a desert bird, or the flash of a sunbeam along the stretches of the moor. In the middle of that melancholy waste stands the farm-house of Lochgoin, intimately connected with the history of the Covenanters. To

this dwelling came Cameron and Peden and found shelter; here lies the notched sword of Captain John Paton, and the drum which was beaten at Drumclog by the hill-folk, and the banner that floated above their heads that day. And here, too, was written the "Scots Worthies," a book considerered by the austerer portion of the Scottish peasantry as next in sacredness to the Bible. And it has other charms this desolate country: over there by Mearns, Christopher North spent his glorious boyhood; in this region, too, Pollok was born, and fed his gloomy spirit on congenial scenes. Approaching the city, and immediately to the left, are the Cathkin Braes: and close by the village of Cathcart, past which the stream runs murmuring in its rocky bed, is the hill on which Mary stood and saw Moray shiver her army like a potsherd. Below Glasgow, and westward, stretches the great valley of the Clyde. On the left is the ancient burgh of Renfrew; farther back Paisley and Johnston, covered with smoke; above all, Gleniffer Braes, greenly fair in sunlight; afar Neilston Pad, raising its flat summit to the sky, like a table spread for a feast of giants. On the right are the Kil-

patrick Hills, terminating in the abrupt peak of Dumbuck; and beyond, the rock of Dumbarton, the ancient fortress, the rock of Ossian's song. It rises before you out of another world and state of things, with years of lamentation and battle wailing around it like sea-mews. By this time the river has widened to an estuary. Port-Glasgow, with its deserted piers, and Greenock, populous with ships, lie on the left. Mid-channel, Rosneath is gloomy with its woods; on the farther shore Helensburgh glitters like a silver thread; in front, a battlement of hills. You pass the point of Gourock, and are in the Highlands. From the opposite coast Loch Long stretches up into yon dark world of mountains. Yonder is Holy Loch, smallest and loveliest of them all. A league of sea is glittering like frosted silver between you and Dunoon. The mighty city, twenty miles away, loud with traffic, dingy with smoke, is the working Glasgow; here, nestling at the foot of mountains, stretching along the sunny crescents of bays, clothing beaked promontories with romantic villas, is another Glasgow keeping holiday the whole summer long. These villages are the pure wheat; the great city, with

its strife and toil, its harass and heart-break—the chaff and husks from which it is winnowed. The city is the soil, this region the bright consummate flower. The merchant leaves behind him in the roar and vapour his manifold vexations, and appears here with his best face and happiest smile. Here no bills intrude, the fluctuations of stock appear not, commercial anxieties are unknown. In their places are donkey rides, the waving of light summer dresses, merry pic-nics, and boating parties at sunset on the splendid sea. Here are the "comforts of the Sautmarket" in the midst of legendary hills. When the tempest is brewing up among the mountains, and night comes down a deluge of wind and rain; when the sea-bird is driven athwart the gloom like a flake of foam severed from the wave, and the crimson eye of the Clock glares at intervals across the frith, you can draw the curtains, stir the fire, and beguile the hours with the smiling wisdom of Thackeray, if a bachelor; if a family man, "The Battle of Prague," or the overture to "Don Giovanni," zealously thumped by filial hands, will drown the storm without. Hugging the left shore, we have Largs

before us, where long ago Haco and his berserkers found dishonourable graves. On the other side is Bute, fairest, most melancholy of all the islands of the Clyde. From its sheltered position it has an atmosphere soft as that of Italy, and is one huge hospital now. You turn out in the dog-days, your head surmounted with a straw-hat ample enough to throw a shadow round you, your nether man encased in linen ducks, and see invalids sitting everywhere in the sunniest spots like autumn flies, or wandering feebly about, wrapt in great-coats, their chalk faces shawled to the nose. You are half-broiled, they shiver as if in an icy wind. Their bent figures take the splendour out of the sea and the glory out of the sunshine. They fill the summer air as with the earthy horror of a new-made grave. You feel that they hang on life feebly, and will drop with the yellow leaf. Beyond Bute are the Cumbraes, twin sisters born in one fiery hour; and afar Arran, with his precipices, purple-frowning on the level sea.

In his preface to the "Rambles" Mr Macdonald writes:—

"The district of which Glasgow is the centre,

while it possesses many scenes of richest Lowland beauty, and presents many glimpses of the stern and wild in Highland landscape, is peculiarly fertile in reminiscences of a historical nature. In the latter respect, indeed, it is excelled by few localities in Scotland—a circumstance of which many of our citizens seem to have been hitherto almost unconscious. There is a story told of a gentleman who, having boasted that he had travelled far to see a celebrated landscape on the Continent, was put to the blush by being compelled to own that he had never visited a scene of superior loveliness than one situated on his own estate, and near which he had spent the greater part of his life. The error of this individual is one of which too many are guilty."

These sentences would make an admirable text for a little week-day sermon. For we are prone, in other matters than scenery, to seek our enjoyments at a distance. We would gather that happiness from the far-off stars which, had we the eyes to see, is all the while lying at our feet. You go to look at a celebrated scene. People have returned from it in raptures. You have heard them

describe it, you have read about it, and you naturally expect something very fine indeed. When you arrive, the chances are that its beauties are carefully stowed away in a thick mist, or you are drenched to the skin, or you find the hotel full, and are forced to sleep in an outhouse, or on the heather beneath the soft burning planets, and go home with a rheumatism which embitters your existence to your dying day. Or, if you are lucky enough to find the weather cloudless and the day warm, you are doomed to cruel disappointment. Is *that* what you have heard and read so much about? That pitiful drivelling cascade! Why, you were led to expect the wavy grace of the Gray Mare's Tail combined with the flash and thunder of Niagara. That a mountain forsooth! It isn't so much bigger than Ben Lomond after all! You feel swindled and taken in. You commend the waterfall to the fiend. You snap your fingers in the face of the mountain. "You're a humbug, sir. You're an impostor, sir. I—I'll write to the *Times* and expose you, sir." On the other hand, the townsman, at the close of a useful and busy day, walks out into the country. The road is pretty;

he has never been on it before; he is insensibly charmed along. He reaches a little village or clachan, its half-dozen thatched houses set down amid blossoming apple-trees; the smoke from the chimneys, telling of the preparation of the evening meal, floating up into the rose of sunset. A labourer is standing at the door with a child in his arms; the unharnessed horses are drinking at the trough; the village boys and girls are busy at their games; two companies, linked arm-in-arm, are alternately advancing and receding, singing all the while with their sweet shrill voices—

"The Campsie Duke 's a riding, a riding, a riding."

This is no uncommon scene in Scotland, and why does it yield more pleasure than the celebrated one that you have gone a hundred miles to see, besides spending no end of money on the way? Simply because you have approached it with a pure, healthy mind, undebauched by rumour or praise. It has in it the element of unexpectedness; which, indeed, is the condition of all delight, for pleasure must surprise if it is to be worthy of the name. The pleasure that is expected and looked for never

comes, or if it does it is in a shape so changed that recognition is impossible. Besides, you have found out the scene, and have thereby a deeper interest in it. This same law pervades everything. You hear of Coleridge's wonderful conversation, and in an evil hour make your appearance at Highgate. The mild-beaming, silvery-haired sage, who conceived listening to be the whole duty of man, talks for the space of three mortal hours—by you happily unheard. For, after the first twenty minutes, you are conscious of a hazy kind of light before your eyes, a soothing sound is murmuring in your ears, a delicious numbness is creeping over all your faculties, and by the end of the first half-hour you are snoring away as comfortably as if you were laid by the side of your lawful spouse. You are disappointed of course: of the musical wisdom which has been flowing in plenteous streams around, you have not tasted one drop; and you never again hear a man praised for power or brilliancy of conversation without an inward shudder. The next day you take your place on the coach, and are fortunate enough to secure your favourite seat beside the driver. Outside of you

is a hard-featured man, wrapt in a huge blue pilot-coat. You have no idea to what class of society he may belong. It is plain that he is not a gentleman in the superfine sense of that term. He has a very remarkable gift of silence. When you have smoked your cigar out, you hazard a remark about the weather. He responds. You try his mind as an angler tries a stream, to see if anything will rise. One thing draws on another, till, after an hour's conversation, which has flown over like a minute, you find that you have really learned something. The unknown individual in the pilot-coat, who has strangely come out of space upon you, and as strangely returns into space again, has looked upon the world, and has formed his own notions and theories of what goes on there. On him life has pressed as well as on you; joy at divers times has lighted up his grim features; sorrow and pain have clouded them. There is something in the man; you are sorry when he is dropped on the road, and say "Good-bye," with more than usual feeling. Why is all this? The man in the pilot-coat does not talk so eloquently as S. T. C., but he instructs and pleases you—and

just because you went to hear the celebrated Talker, as you go to see the Irish Giant, or the Performing Pig, you are disappointed, as you deserved to be. The man in the pilot-coat has come upon you naturally, unexpectedly. At its own sweet will "the cloud turned forth its silver lining on the night." Happiness may best be extracted from the objects surrounding us. The theory on which our loud tumultuary modern life is based—that we can go to Pleasure, that if we frequent her haunts we are sure to find her—is a heresy and a falsehood. She will not be constrained. She obeys not the call of the selfish or the greedy. Depend upon it she is as frequently found on homely roads, and amongst rustic villages and farms, as among the glaciers of Chamouni, or the rainbows of Niagara.

In one of his earliest rambles, Mr Macdonald follows the river for some miles above the city. The beauty of the Clyde below Glasgow is well known to the civilised world. Even the *roué* of landscape, to whom the Rhine is weariness and the Alps common-place, has felt his heart leap within him while gazing on that magnificent estu-

ary. But it is not only in her maturity that the Clyde is fair. Beauty attends her from her birth on Rodger Law until she is wedded with ocean —Bute, and the twin Cumbraes, bridesmaids of the stream ; Arran, groomsman to the main. With Mr Macdonald's book in pocket to be a companion at intervals—for one requires no guide, having years before learned every curve and bend of the river—let us start along its banks towards Carmyle and Kenmure wood. We pass Dalmarnock Bridge, and leave the city, with its windowed factories and driving wheels and everlasting canopy of smoke behind. The stream comes glittering down between green banks, one of which rises high on the left, so that further vision in that quarter is intercepted. On the right are villages and farms ; afar, the Cathkin Braes, the moving cloud shadows mottling their sunny slopes ; and straight ahead, and closing the view, the spire of Cambuslang Church, etched on the pallid azure of the sky. We are but two miles from the city, and everything is bright and green. The butterfly flutters past ; the dragonfly darts hither and thither. See, he poises himself on his winnowing wings, about half a yard from

one's nose, which he curiously inspects; that done, off darts the winged tenpenny-nail, his rings gleaming like steel. There are troops of swallows about. Watch one. Now he is high in air—now he skims the Clyde. You can hear his sharp, querulous twitter as he jerks and turns. Nay, it is said that the kingfisher himself has been seen gleaming along these sandy banks, illuminating them like a meteor. At some little distance a white house is pleasantly situated amongst trees—it is Dalbeth Convent. As we pass, one of the frequent bells summoning the inmates to devotion is stirring the sunny Presbyterian air. A little on this side of the convent, a rapid brook comes rushing to the Clyde, crossed by a rude bridge of planks, which has been worn by the feet of three generations at the very least. The brook, which is rather huffy and boisterous in its way, particularly after rain, had, a few days before, demolished and broken up said wooden planks, and carried one of them off. Arriving, we find a woman and boy anxious to cross, yet afraid to venture. Service is proffered, and, after a little trouble, both are landed in safety on the farther bank. The woman is

plainly, yet neatly dressed, and may be about forty-five years of age or thereby. The boy has turned eleven, has long yellow hair hanging down his back, and looks thin and slender for his years. With them they have something wrapped up in a canvas cloth, which, to the touch as they are handed across, seem to be poles of about equal length. For the slight service the woman returns thanks in a tone which smacks of the southern English counties. "Good-bye" is given and returned, and we proceed, puzzling ourselves a good deal as to what kind of people they are, and what their business may be in these parts, but can come to no conclusion. However, it does not matter much, for the ironworks are passed now, and the river banks are beautiful. They are thickly wooded, and at a turn the river flows straight down upon you for a mile, with dusty meal-mills on one side, a dilapidated wheel-house on the other, and stretching from bank to bank a half-natural, half-artificial shallow horse-shoe fall, over which the water tumbles in indolent foam—a sight which a man who has no pressing engagements, and is fond of exercise, may walk fifty miles to see, and be amply rewarded for

his pains. In front is a ferry—a rope extending across the river by which the boat is propelled—and lo! a woman in a scarlet cloak on the opposite side hails the ferryman, and that functionary comes running to his duty. Just within the din of the shallow horse-shoe fall lies the village of Carmyle, an old, quiet, sleepy place, where nothing has happened for the last fifty years, and where nothing will happen for fifty years to come. Ivy has been the busiest thing here; it has crept up the walls of the houses, and in some instances fairly "put out the light" of the windows. The thatched roofs are covered with emerald moss. The plum-tree which blossomed some months ago blossomed just the same in the spring which witnessed the birth of the oldest inhabitant. For half a century not one stone has been placed upon another here—there are only a few more green mounds in the churchyard. It is the centre of the world. All else is change: this alone is stable. There is a repose deeper than sleep in this little, antiquated village—ivy-muffled, emerald-mossed, lullabied for ever by the fall of waters. The meal-mills, dusty and white as the clothes of the miller himself, whir industriously;

the waters of the lade come boiling out from beneath the wheel, and reach the Clyde by a channel dug by the hand of man long ago, but like a work of nature's now, so covered with furze as it is. Look down through the clear amber of the current, and you see the "long green gleet of the slippery stones" in which the silver-bellied eel delights. Woe betide the luckless village urchin that dares to wade therein. There is a sudden splash and roar. When he gets out, he is laid with shrill objurgations across the broad maternal knee, and fright and wet clothes are avenged by sound whacks from the broad maternal hand. Leaving the village, we proceed onward. The banks come closer, the stream is shallower, and whirls in eddy and circle over a rocky bed. There is a woodland loneliness about the river which is aided by the solitary angler standing up to his middle in the water, and waiting patiently for the bite that never comes, or by the water-ousel flitting from stone to stone. In a quarter of an hour we reach Kenmuir Bank, which rises some seventy feet or so, filled with trees, their trunks rising bare for a space, and then spreading out with branch and foliage into a matted shade, permitting

the passage only of a few flakes of sunlight at noon, resembling, in the green twilight, a flock of visionary butterflies alighted and asleep. Within, the wood is jungle; you wade to the knees in brushwood and bracken. The trunks are clothed with ivy, and snakes of ivy creep from tree to tree, some green with life, some tarnished with decay. At the end of the Bank there is a clear well, in which, your face meeting its shadow, you may quench your thirst. Seated here, you have the full feeling of solitude. An angler wades out into mid-channel—a bird darts out of a thicket, and slides away on noiseless wing—the shallow wash and murmur of the Clyde flows through a silence as deep as that of an American wilderness—and yet, by to-morrow, the water which mirrors as it passes the beauty of the lucken-gowan hanging asleep, will have received the pollutions of a hundred sewers, and be bobbing up and down among the crowds of vessels at the Broomielaw. Returning homeward by the top of Kenmuir Bank, we gaze westward. Out of a world of smoke the stalk of St Rollox rises like a banner-staff, its vapoury streamer floating on the wind; and afar, through

the gap between the Campsie and Kilpatrick hills, Benlomond himself, with a streak of snow upon his shoulder. Could one but linger here for a couple of hours, one would of a verity behold a sight—the sun setting in yonder lurid, smoke-ocean. The wreaths of vapour which seem so common-place and vulgar now, so suggestive of trade and swollen purses and rude manners, would then become a glory such as never shepherd beheld at sunrise on his pastoral hills. Beneath a roof of scarlet flame, one would see the rolling edges of the smoke change into a brassy brightness, as with intense heat; the dense mass and volume of it dark as midnight, or glowing with the solemn purple of thunder; while right in the centre of all, where it has burned a clear way for itself, the broad fluctuating orb, paining the eye with concentrated splendours, and sinking gradually down, a black spire cutting his disk in two. But for this one cannot wait, and the apparition will be unbeheld but by the rustic stalking across the field in company with his prodigious shadow, and who, turning his face to the flame, will conceive it the most ordinary thing in the world. We keep the upper road on our re-

turn, and in a short time are again at Carmyle; we have no intention of tracing the river bank a second time, and so turn up the narrow street. But what is to do? The children are gathered in a circle, and the wives are standing at the open doors. There is a performance going on. The tambourine is sounding, and a tiny acrobat, with a fillet round his brow, tights covered with tinsel lozenges, and flesh-coloured shoes, is striding about on a pair of stilts, to the no small amazement and delight of the juveniles. He turns his head, and—why, it's the little boy I assisted across the brook at Dalbeth three hours ago, and of course that's the old lady who is thumping and jingling the tambourine, and gathering in the halfpennies! God bless her jolly old face! who would have thought of meeting her here? I am recognised, the boy waves me farewell, the old lady smiles and curtsies, thumps her tambourine, and rattles the little bells of it with greater vigour than ever. The road to Glasgow is now comparatively uninteresting. The trees wear a dingy colour; you pass farm-houses, with sooty stacks standing in the yard. 'Tis a coaly, dusty district, which has character-

istics worth noting. For, as the twilight falls dewily on far-off lea and mountain, folding up daisy and buttercup, putting the linnet to sleep beside his nest of young in the bunch of broom, here the circle of the horizon becomes like red-hot steel; the furnaces of the Clyde iron-works lift up their mighty towers of flame, throwing

> "Large and angry lustres o'er the sky,
> And shifting lights across the long dark roads;"

and so, through chase of light and shade, through glimmer of glare and gloom, we find our way back to Glasgow—its low hum breaking into separate and recognisable sounds, its nebulous brightness into far-stretching street-lamps, as we draw near.

The tourist who travels by train from Glasgow to Greenock must pass the town of Paisley. If he glances out of the carriage window he will see beneath him a third-rate Scotch town, through which flows the foulest and shallowest of rivers.

The principal building in the town, and the one which first attracts the eye of a stranger, is the jail; then follow the church spires in their order of merit. Unfortunately the train passes not through Paisley, but over it; and from his "coign of van-

tage" the tourist beholds much that is invisible to the passenger in the streets. All the back-greens, piggeries, filthy courts, and unmentionable abominations of the place, are revealed to him for a moment as the express flashes darkly across the railway bridge. For the seeing of Scotch towns a bird's-eye view is plainly the worst point of view. In all likelihood the tourist, as he passes, will consider Paisley the ugliest town he has ever beheld, and feel inwardly grateful that his lot has not been cast therein. But in this the tourist may be very much mistaken. Paisley is a remarkable place—one of the most remarkable in Scotland. Just as Comrie is the abode of earthquakes, Paisley is the abode of poetic inspiration. There is no accounting for the tastes of the celestials. Queen Titania fell in love with Bottom when he wore the ass's head; and Paisley, ugly as it is, is the favourite seat of the Muses. There Apollo sits at the loom and earns eighteen shillings per week. At this moment, and the same might have been said of any moment since the century came in, there is perhaps a greater number of poets living and breathing in this little town than in the whole of England. Whether this may

arise from the poverty of the place, on the principle that the sweetness of the nightingale's song is connected in some subtle way with the thorn against which she leans her breast, it may be useless to inquire. Proceed from what cause it may, Paisley has been for the last fifty years or more an aviary of singing birds. To said aviary I had once the honour to be introduced. Some years ago, when dwelling in the outskirts of the town, I received a billet intimating that the L. C. A. would meet on the evening of the 26th Jan. 18—, in honour of the memory of the immortal Robert Burns, and requesting my attendance. N.B.—Supper and drink, 1s. 6d. Being a good deal puzzled by the mystic characters, I made inquiries, and discovered that L. C. A. represented the "Literary and Convivial Association," which met every Saturday evening for the cultivation of the minds of its members—a soil which for years had been liberally irrigated with toddy—with correspondent effects. To this cheap feast of the gods on the sacred evening in question I directed my steps, and beheld the assembled poets. There could scarcely have been fewer than eighty present. Strange! Each of these conceited

himself of finer clay than ordinary mortals; each of these had composed verses, some few had even published small volumes or pamphlets of verse by subscription, and drank the anticipated profits; each of these had his circle of admirers and flatterers, his small public and shred of reputation; each of these envied and hated his neighbour; and not unfrequently two bards would quarrel in their cups as to which of them was possessor of the larger amount of fame. At that time the erection of a monument to Thom of Inverury had been talked about, *apropos* of which one of the bards remarked, "Ou ay, jist like them. They'll bigg us monuments whan we're deid: I wush they'd gie us something whan we're leevin'." In that room, amid that motley company, one could see the great literary world unconsciously burlesqued and travestied, shadowed forth there the emptiness and noise of it, the blatant vanity of many of its members. The eighty poets presented food for meditation. Well, it is from this town that I propose taking a walk, for behind Paisley lie Gleniffer Braes, the scene of Tannahill's songs. One can think of Burns apart from Ayrshire, of Wordsworth apart

from Cumberland, but hardly of Tannahill apart from the Braes of Gleniffer. The district, too, is of but little extent; in a walk of three hours you can see every spot mentioned by the poet. You visit his birthplace in the little straggling street, where the sound of the shuttle is continually heard. You pass up to the green hills where he delighted to wander, and whose charms he has celebrated; and you return by the canal where, when the spirit "finely touched to fine issues," was disordered and unstrung, he sought repose. Birth, life, and death lie side by side. The matter of the moral is closely packed. The whole tragedy sleeps in the compass of an epigram.

Leaving the rambling suburbs of Paisley, you pass into a rough and undulating country with masses of gray crag interspersed with whinny knolls, where, in the evenings, the linnet sings; with narrow sandy roads wandering through it hither and thither, passing now a clump of gloomy firs, now a house where some wealthy townsman resides, now a pleasant corn-field. A pretty bit of country enough, with larks singing above it from dawn to sunset, and where, in the gloaming, the wanderer not un-

frequently can mark the limping hare. A little further on are the ruins of Stanley Castle. This castle, in the days of the poet, before the wildness of the country had been tamed by the plough, must have lent a singular charm to the landscape. It stands at the base of the hills which rise above it with belt of wood, rocky chasm, white streak of waterfall—higher up into heath and silence, silence deep as the heaven that overhangs it; where nothing moves save the vast cloud-shadows, where nothing is heard save the cry of the moorland bird. Tannahill was familiar with the castle in its every aspect—when sunset burned on the walls, when the moon steeped it in silver and silence, and when it rose up before him shadowy and vast through the marshy mists. He had his loom to attend during the day, and he knew the place best in its evening aspect. Twilight, with its quietude and stillness, seemed to have peculiar charms for his sensitive nature, and many of his happiest lines are descriptive of its phenomena. But the glory is in a great measure departed from Stanley Tower; the place has been turned into a reservoir by the Water Company, and the ruin is frequently surrounded by

water. This intrusion of water has spoiled the scene. The tower is hoary and broken, the lake looks a thing of yesterday, and there are traces of quite recent masonry about. The lake's shallow extent, its glitter and brightness, are impertinences. Only during times of severe frost, when its surface is iced over, when the sun is sinking in the purple vapours like a globe of red-hot iron—when the skaters are skimming about like swallows, and the curlers are boisterous—for the game has been long and severe—and the decisive stone is roaring up the rink—only in such circumstances does the landscape regain some kind of keeping and homogeneousness. There is no season like winter for improving a country; he tones it down to one colour; he breathes over its waters, and in the course of a single night they become gleaming floors, on which youth may disport itself. He powders his black forest-boughs with the pearlin's of his frosts; and the fissures which spring tries in vain to hide with her flowers, and autumn with fallen leaves, he fills up at once with a snow-wreath. But we must be getting forward, up that

winding road, progress marked by gray crag, tuft of heather, bunch of mountain violets, the country beneath stretching out farther and farther. Lo! a strip of emerald steals down the gray of the hill, and there, by the way-side, is an ample well, with the "netted sunbeam" dancing in it. Those who know Tannahill's "Gloomy Winter's noo awa'" must admire its curious felicity of touch and colour. Turn round, you are in the very scene of the song. In front is "Gleniffer's dewy dell," to the east "Glenkelloch's sunny brae," afar the woods of Newton, over which at this moment laverocks fan the "snaw-white cluds;" below, the "burnie" leaps in sparkle and foam over many a rocky shelf, till its course is lost in that gorge of gloomy firs, and you can only hear the music of its joy. Which is the fairer—the landscape before your eyes, or the landscape sleeping in the light of song? You cannot tell, for they are at once different and the same. The touch of the poet was loving and true. His genius was like the light of early spring, clear from speck or stain of vapour, but with tremulousness and uncertainty in it; happy, but with grief

lying quite close to its happiness; smiling, although the tears are hardly dry upon the cheeks that in a moment may be wet again.

But who is Tannahill? the southern reader asks with some wonder; and in reply it may be said that Burns, like every great poet, had many imitators and successors, and that of these successors in the north country Hogg and Tannahill are the most important. Hogg was a shepherd in The Forest, and he possessed out of sight the larger nature, the greater intellectual force; while as master of the weird and the supernatural there is no Scottish poet to be put beside him. The soul of Ariel seems to inhabit him at times. He utters a strange music like the sighing of the night-wind; a sound that seems to live remote from human habitations. In openness to spiritual beauty, Burns, compared with him, was an ordinary ploughman. Like Thomas the Rhymer, he lay down to sleep on a green bank on a summer's day, and the Queen of Fancy visited his slumber; and never afterwards could he forget her beauty, and her voice, and the liquid jingling of her bridle bells. Tannahill was a weaver, who wrote songs, became crazed, and com-

mitted suicide before he reached middle life. His was a weak, tremulous nature. He was wretched by reason of over-sensitiveness. "He lived retired as noon-tide dew." He wanted Hogg's strength, self-assertion, humour, and rough sagacity; nor had he a touch of his weird strain. From Burns, again, he was as different as a man could possibly be. Tannahill knew nothing of the tremendous life-battle fought on wet Mossgiel farm, in fashionable Edinburgh, in provincial Dumfries. He knew nothing of the Love, Scorn, Despair, —those wild beasts that roamed the tropics of Burns's heart. But limited as was his genius, it was in its quality perhaps more exquisite than theirs. He was only a song-writer—both Burns and Hogg were more than that—and some of his songs are as nearly as possible perfect. He knew nothing of the mystery of life. If the fierce hand of Passion had been laid upon his harp, it would have broken at once its fragile strings. He looked upon nature with a pensive yet a loving eye. Gladness flowed upon him from the bright face of spring, despondency from the snow-flake and the sweeping winter winds. His amatory songs

have no fire in them. While Burns would have held Annie in his "straining grasp," Tannahill, with a glow upon his cheek, would have pointed out to the unappreciating fair the "plantin' tree-taps tinged wi' gowd," or silently watched the "midges dance aboon the burn." Then, by the aid of that love of nature, how clearly he sees, and how exquisitely he paints what he sees—

> "Feathery breckans fringe the rocks;
> 'Neath the brae the burnie jouks."

> "Towering o'er the Newton wuds,
> Laverocks fan the snaw-white cluds."

Neither Keats nor Tennyson, nor any of their numerous followers surpassed this unlettered weaver in felicity of colour and touch. Any one wishing to prove the truth of Tannahill's verse, could not do better than bring out his song-book here, and read and ramble, and ramble and read again.

But why go farther to-day? The Peesweep Inn, where the rambler baits, is yet afar on the heath; Kilbarchan, queerest of villages, is basking its straggling length on the hill-side in the sun, peopled by botanical and bird-nesting weavers, its

cross adorned by the statue of Habbie Simpson, "with his pipes across the wrong shoulder." Westward is Elderslie, where Wallace was born, and there, too, till within the last few years, stood the oak amongst whose branches, as tradition tells, the hero, when hard pressed by the Southrons, found shelter with all his men. From afar came many a pilgrim to behold the sylvan giant. Before its fall it was sorely mutilated by time and tourists. Of its timber were many snuff-boxes made. Surviving the tempests of centuries, it continued to flourish green atop, although its heart was hollow as a ruined tower. At last a gale, which heaped our coasts with shipwreck, struck it down with many of its meaner brethren. "To this complexion must we come at last." At our feet lies Paisley with its poets. Seven miles off, Glasgow peers, with church-spire and factory stalk, through a smoky cloud; the country between gray with distance, and specked here and there with the vapours of the trains. How silent the vast expanse! not a sound reaches the ear on the height. Gleniffer Braes are clear in summer light, beautiful as when the poet walked across them. Enough, their

beauty and his memory. One is in no mood to look even at the unsightly place beside the canal which was sought when to the poor disordered brain the world was black, and fellow-men ravening wolves. Here he walked happy in his genius; not a man to wonder at and bow the knee to, but one fairly to appreciate and acknowledge. For the twitter of the wren is music as well as the lark's lyrical up-burst; the sigh of the reed shaken by the wind as well as the roaring of a league of pines.

HÖME.

WHEN of an autumn evening the train brought me into Edinburgh, the scales of familiarity having to some little extent fallen from my eyes, I thought I had never before seen it so beautiful. Its brilliancy was dazzling and fairy-like. It was like a city of Chinese lanterns. It was illuminated as if for a great victory, or the marriage of a king. Princes Street blazed with street lamps and gay shop-windows. The Old Town was a maze of twinkling lights. The Mound lifted up its starry coil. The North Bridge leaping the chasm, held lamps high in air. There were lights on the Calton Hill, lights on the crest of the Castle. The city was in a full blossom of lights—to wither by midnight, to be all dead ere dawn. And then to an ear accustomed to silence there arose on every side the potent hum of moving multitudes, more august in itself, infinitely more suggestive to the imagination than the noise of the Atlantic

on the Skye shores. The sound with which I had been for some time familiar was the voice of many billows; the sound which was in my ears was the noise of men.

And in driving home, too, I was conscious of a curious oppugnancy between the Skye life which I had for some time been leading, and the old Edinburgh life which had been dropped for a little, and which had now to be resumed. The two experiences met like sheets of metal, but they were still separate sheets — I could not solder them together and make them one. I knew that a very few days would do that for me; but it was odd to attempt by mental effort to unite the experiences and to discover how futile was all such effort. Coming back to Edinburgh was like taking up abode in a house to which one had been for a while a stranger, in which one knew all the rooms and all the articles of furniture in the rooms, but with whose knowledge there was mingled a feeling of strangeness. I had changed my clothes of habit, and for the moment I did not feel so much at ease in the strange Edinburgh, as the familiar Skye, suit.

It was fated, however, that the two modes of life should, in my consciousness, melt into each other imperceptibly. When I reached home I found that my friend the Rev. Mr Macpherson of Inverary had sent me a packet of Ossianic translations. These translations, breathing the very soul of the wilderness I had lately left, I next day perused in my Edinburgh surroundings, and through their agency the two experiences coalesced. Something of Edinburgh melted into my remembrance of Skye—something of Skye was projected into actual Edinburgh. Thus is life enriched by ideal contrast and interchange. With certain of these translations I conclude my task. To me they were productive of much pleasure. And should the shadows in my book have impressed the reader to any extent, as the realities impressed me—if I have in any way kindled the feeling of Skye in his imagination as it lives in mine—these fragments of austere music will not be ungrateful.

EXTRACT FROM CARRICK-THURA.

NIGHT fell on wave-beat Rotha,
The hill-shelter'd bay received the ships;
A rock rose by the skirt of the ocean,
A wood waved over the boom of the waves;
Above was the circle of Lodin,
And the huge stones of many a power;
Below was a narrow plain
And tree and grass beside the sea.
A tree torn by the wind when high
From the skirt of the cairns to the plain.
Beyond was the blue travel of streams;
A gentle breeze came from the stilly sea,
A flame rose from a hoary oak;
The feast of the chiefs was spread on the heath;
Grieved was the soul of the king of shields,
For the chief of dark Carrick of the braves.

The moon arose slow and faint;
Deep slumber fell round the heads of the braves,
Their helmets gleam'd around;
The fire was dying on the hill.
Sleep fell not on the eyelids of the king;
He arose in the sound of his arms
To view the wave-beat Carrick.
The fire lower'd in the far distance,
The moon was in the east red and slow.
A blast came down from the cairn;
On its wings was the semblance of a man,
Orm Lodin, ghastly on the sea.
He came to his own dwelling-place,
His black spear useless in his hand,
His red eye as the fire of the skies,
His voice as the torrent of the mountains.

Far distant in the murky gloom.
Fingal raised his spear in the night,
His challenge was heard on the plain—
"Son of the night, from my side,
Take the wind—away;
Why shouldst come to my presence, feeble one,
Thy form as powerless as thy arms?
Do I dread thy dark-brown shape,
Spirit of the circles of Lodin?
Weak is thy shield and thy form of subtle cloud,
Thy dull-edged sword as fire in the great waves,
A blast parts them asunder,
And thou [thyself] art straightway dispersed
From my presence, dark son of the skies.
Call thy blast—away!"
"Wouldst thou drive me from my own circle?"
Said the hollow voice of eeriest sound.
"To me bends the host of the braves;
I look from my wood on the people,
And they fall as ashes before my sight;
From my breath comes the blast of death;
I come forth on high on the wind;
The storms are pouring aloft
Around my brow, cold, gloomy, and dark.
Calm is my dwelling in the clouds,
Pleasant the great fields of my repose."
"Dwell in thy plains,"
Said the mighty king, his hand on his sword;
"Else remember the son of Cumal in the field;
Feeble is thy phantom, great is my strength.
Have I moved my step from the mountain
To thy halls on the peaceful plain?
Has my powerful spear met
In the skyey robe the voice
Of the dark spirit of the circle of Lodin?
Why raise thy brow in gloom?

Why brandishest thy spear on high?
Little I fear thy threats, feeble one,
I fled not from hosts on the field,
Why should flee from the seed of the winds
The mighty hero, Morven's king?
Flee he will not, well he knows
The weakness of thy arm in battle."
"Flee to thy land," replied the Form,
"Flee on the black wind—away!
The blast is in the hollow of my hand—
Mine are the course and wrestling of the storm,
The king of Soroch is my son,
He bends on the hill to my shade,
His battle is at Carrick of the hundred braves,
And safe he shall win the victory—
"Flee to thy own land, son of Cumal,
Else feel to thy sorrow my rage."
High he lifted his dark spear,
Fiercely he bent his lofty head.
Against him Fingal advanced amain, [a-fire,]
His bright-blue sword in hand,
Son of Loon—the swartest cheek'd.
The light of the steel passed through the Spirit,
The gloomy and feeble spirit of death.
Shapeless he fell, yonder [opposite]
On the wind of the black cairns, as smoke
Which a young one breaks, rod in hand,
At the hearth of smoke and struggle,
The Form of Lodin shriek'd in the hill,
Gathering himself in the wind,
Innis-Torc heard the sound,
The waves with terror stay their courses:
Up rose the braves of Cumal's son.
Each hand grasp'd a spear on the hill,
"Where is he?" they cried with frowning rage,
Each armour sounding on its lord.

EXTRACTS FROM FINGAL.

Cuchullin sat by the wall of Tura,
In the shade of the tree of sounding leaf;
His spear leant against the cave-pierced rock,
His great shield by his side on the grass.
The thoughts of the chief were on Cairber.
A hero he had slain in battle fierce,
When the watcher of the ocean came,
The swift son of Fili with the bounding step.
"Arise, Cuchullin, arise,
I see a gallant fleet from the north,
Swift bestir thee, chief of the banquet,
Great is Swaran, numerous is his host!"
"Moran, answered the dauntless blue-eyed,
Weak and trembling wert thou aye;
In thy fear the foe is numerous;
Son of Fili is Fingal,
High champion of the dark-mottled hills."
"I saw their leader," answer'd Moran;
"Like to a rock was the chief,
His spear as a fir on the rocky mountain,
His shield as the rising moon:
He sat on a rock on the shore
As the mist yonder on the hill."
"Many," I said, "chief of the strangers,
Are the champions that rise with thee,
Strong warriors, of hardiest stroke,
And keenest brand in the play of men.
But more numerous and valiant are the braves
That surround the windy Tura."
Answer'd the brave, as a wave on a rock,
"Who in this land is like me?
Thy heroes could not stand in my presence;
But low they should fall beneath my hand.

Who is he would meet my sword?
Save Fingal, king of stormy Selma.
Once on a day we grasp'd each other
On Melmor, and fierce was our strife.
The wood fell in the unyielding fight,
The streams turn'd aside, and trembled the cairn.
Three days the strife was renew'd,
Warriors bravest in battle trembled.
On the fourth, said Fingal the king—
'The ocean chief fell in the glen.'
He fell not, was my answer."
Let Cuchullin yield to the chief,
Who is stronger than the mountain storm.
I, said the dauntless blue-eyed,
Yield I shall not to living man.
Cuchullin shall, resolute as he, be
Great in battle, or stainless in death.
Son of Fili, seize my spear,
Strike the joyless and gloomy shield of Sema;
Thou shalt see it high on the wall of spears;
No omen of peace was its sound.
Swift, son of Fili, strike the shield of Sema,
Summon my heroes from forest and copse.
Swift he struck the spotted [bossy] shield,
Each copse and forest answer'd.
Pauseless, the alarm sped through the grove;
The deer and the roe started on the heath:
Curtha leap'd from the sounding rock:
Connal of the doughtiest spear bestirr'd himself
Favi left the hind in the chase:
Crugeal return'd to festive Jura.
Ronan, hark to the shield of the battles;
Cuchullin's land signal, Cluthais;
Calmar, hither come from the ocean:
With thy arms hither come, O Luthair.
Son of Finn, thou strong warrior, arise;

Cairber [come] from the voiced Cromlec;
Bend thy knee, free-hearted Fichi.
Cormag [come] from streamy Lena.
Coilte, stretch thy splendid side, [limbs]
Swift, travelling from Mora,
Thy side, whiter than the foam, spread
On the storm-vex'd sea.
Then might be seen the heroes of high deeds
Descending each from his own winding glen,
Each soul burning with remembrance
Of the battles of the time gone by of old:
Their eyes kindling and searching fiercely round
For the dark foe of Innisfail.
Each mighty hand on the hilt of each brand
Blazing, lightning flashing [*lit.*, streaming bright, like the sun] from their armour.
As pours a stream from a wild glen
Descend the braves from the sides of the mountains,
Each chief in the mail of his illustrious sire.
His stern, dark-visaged warriors behind,
As the gatherings of the waters of the mountains [*i.e.*, rain-clouds]
Around the lightning of the sky.
At every step was heard the sound of arms
And the bark of hounds, high gambling
Songs were humm'd in every mouth,
Each dauntless hero eager for the strife.
Cromlec shook on the face of the mountains,
As they march'd athwart the heath:
They stood on the inclines of the hills,
As the hoary mist of autumn
That closes round the sloping mountain,
And binds its forehead to the sky.

FINGAL, Lib. i., line 1–100.

As rushes a gray stream in foam
From the iron front of lofty Cromla;
The torrent travelling the mountains,
While dark night enwraps the cairns:
And the cold shades of paly hue
Look down from the skirts of the showers;
So fierce, so great, so pitiless, so swift
Advanced the hardy seed of Erin.
Their chief, as the great boar [whale] of the ocean,
Drawing the cold waves behind him;
Pouring his strength as billows; [or *in* billows,]
'Neath his travel shakes the shore.
The seed of Lochlin heard the sound,
As the cold roaring stream of winter;
Swift Swaran struck his shield,
And spoke to the son of Arn beside him—
I hear a sound on the side of the mountains,
As the evening fly of slow movements;
It is the gallant sons of Erin,
Or a storm in the distant woodland.
Like Gormal is the sound,
Ere wakes the tempest in the high seas:
Hie thee to the heights, son of Arn,
Survey each copse and hill-side.
He went, and soon return'd in terror,
His eye fix'd and wild in his head;
His heart beat quick against his side,
His speech was feeble, slow, and broken.
"Arise! thou Lord of the waves,
Mighty chief of the dark shields;
I see the stream of the dark-wooded mountains,
I see the seed of Erin and their lord.
A chariot! the mighty chariot of battle
Advances with death across the plain;
The well-made swift chariot of Cuchullin,
The great son of Sema, mighty in danger.

Behind, it bends down like a wave,
Or the mist on the copse of the sharp rocks;
The light of stones of power [gems] is round,
As the sea round a bark at night.
Of polish'd yew is the beam,
The seats within are of smoothest bone;
The dwelling-place of spears it is,
Of shields, of swords, and of mighty men.
By the right side of the great chariot
Is seen the snorting, high-mettled steed;
The high-maned, broad, black-chested,
High-leaping, strong son of the hills.
Loud and resounding is his hoof:
The spread of his frontlets above
Is like mist on the haunts of the elk;
Bright was his aspect, and swift his going,
Sith-fadda [Long-stride] is his name.
By the other side of the chariot
Is the arch-neck'd, snorting,
Narrow-maned, high-mettled, strong-hoofed,
Swift-footed, wide-nostril'd steed of the mountains,
Du-sron-geal is the name of the horse.
Full a thousand slender thongs
Bind the chariot on high;
The bright steel bits of the bridles
Are cover'd with foam in their cheeks:
Blazing stones, sparkling bright,
Bend aloft on the manes of the steeds—
Of the steeds that are like the mist on the mountains,
Bearing the chief to his renown.
Wilder than the deer is their aspect,
Powerful as the eagle their strength;
Their sound is like the savage winter
On Gormal, when cover'd with snow.
In the chariot is seen the chief,
The mighty son of the keenest arms—

Cuchullin of the blue-spotted shields.
The son of Sema, renown'd in song,
His cheek is as the polish'd yew;
His strong eye is spreading high,
'Neath his dark-arch'd and slender brow.
His yellow hair, as a blaze round his head,
Pouring [waving] round the splendid face of the hero,
While he draws from behind his spear.
Flee, great chief of ships!
Flee from the hero who comes
As a storm from the glen of streams."
"When did I flee? said the king of ships
When fled Swaran of the dark shields?
When did I shun the threatening danger,
Son of Arn—aye feeble?
I have borne the tempest of the skies,
On the bellowing sea of inclement showers;
The sternest battles I have borne,
Why should I flee from the conflict,
Son of Arn, of feeblest hand?
Arise my thousands on the field,
Pour as the roar of the ocean,
When bends the blast from the cloud,
Let gallant Lochlin rise around my steel.
Be ye like rocks on the edge of the ocean,
In my own land of oars,
That lifts the pine aloft
To battle with the tempests of the sky."
As the sound of autumn from two mountains
Towards each other drew the braves,
As a mighty stream from two rocks,
Flowing, pouring on the plain;
Sounding dark, fierce in battle,
Met Lochlin and Innesfail.
Chief mix'd his strokes with chief,
Man contended with man,

Steel clang'd on steel,
Helmets are cleft on high,
Blood is pouring fast around,
The bow-string twangs on the polish'd yew;
Arrows traverse the sky,
Spears strike and fall,
As the bolt of night on the mountains,
As the bellowing seething of the ocean,
When advance the waves on high;
Like the torrent behind the mountains
Was the gloom and din of the conflict.
Though the hundred bards of Cormag were there,
And their songs described the combat,
Scarcely could they tell
Of each headless corpse and death—
Many were the deaths of men and chiefs,
Their blood spreading on the plain.
Mourn, ye race of songs,
For Sith-alum the child of the braves:
Evir, heave thy snowy breast
For gallant Ardan of fiercest look.
As two roes that fall from the mountain,
[They fell] 'neath the hand of dark-shielded Swaran;
While dauntless he moved before his thousands,
As a spirit in the cloudy sky,
A spirit that sits in cloud,
Half made by mist from the north,
When bends the lifeless mariner
A look of woe on the summit of the waves.
Nor slept thy hand by the side,
Chief of the isle of gentle showers;
Thy brand was in the path of spoils,
As lightning flashing thick,
When the people fall in the glen,
And the face of the mountain, as in a blaze,
[Or is seething white with torrents,]

Du-sron-geal snorted over brave men,
Sith-fadda wash'd his hoof in blood,
Behind him lay full many a hero,
As a wood on Cromla of the floods,
When moves the blast through the heath,
With the airy ghosts of night.

Weep on the sounding rock,
Noble daughter of the isle of ships;
Bend thy splendid countenance over the sea,
Thou lovelier than a spirit in the woods,
Rising up soft and slow
As a sunbeam in the silence of the hills.
He fell, soon he fell in the battle,
The youth of thy love is pale,
'Neath the sword of great Cuchullin.
What has made thee so wan and cold?
He will move no more to hardy deeds,
He will not strike the high blood of heroes;
Trenar, youthful Trena has fallen in death;
Maid, thou shalt see thy love no more for ever.
His hounds howl piteously
At home, as they see his ghost,
His bow is unstrung and bare;
His death-sound is on the knoll, [*i.e.*, on the knoll he utters his death-groan.]
As roll a thousand waves to the shore,
So under Swaran advanced the foe;
As meets the shore a thousand waves,
So Erin met the king of ships.
Then arose the voices of death,
The sound of battle-shout and clang of arms,
Shields and mail lay broken on the ground.
A sword like lightning was high in each hand,
The noise of battle rose from wing to wing,
Of battle, roaring, bloody, hot,

As a hundred hammers striking wild,
By turns, showers of red sparks from the glowing forge,
Who are those on hilly Sena?
Who of darkest and fiercest gloom?
Who likest to the murkiest cloud?
The sword of each chief as fire on the waves,
The face of the woods is troubled,
The wave-beat rock shakes on the shore.
Who, but Swaran of ships
And the chief of Erin, renown'd in song?
The eye of the hosts beholds aside
The encounter of the mighty heroes.
Night descended on the combat of the braves,
And hid the undecided conflict.

FINGAL, Book i., 313-502.

THE END

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